

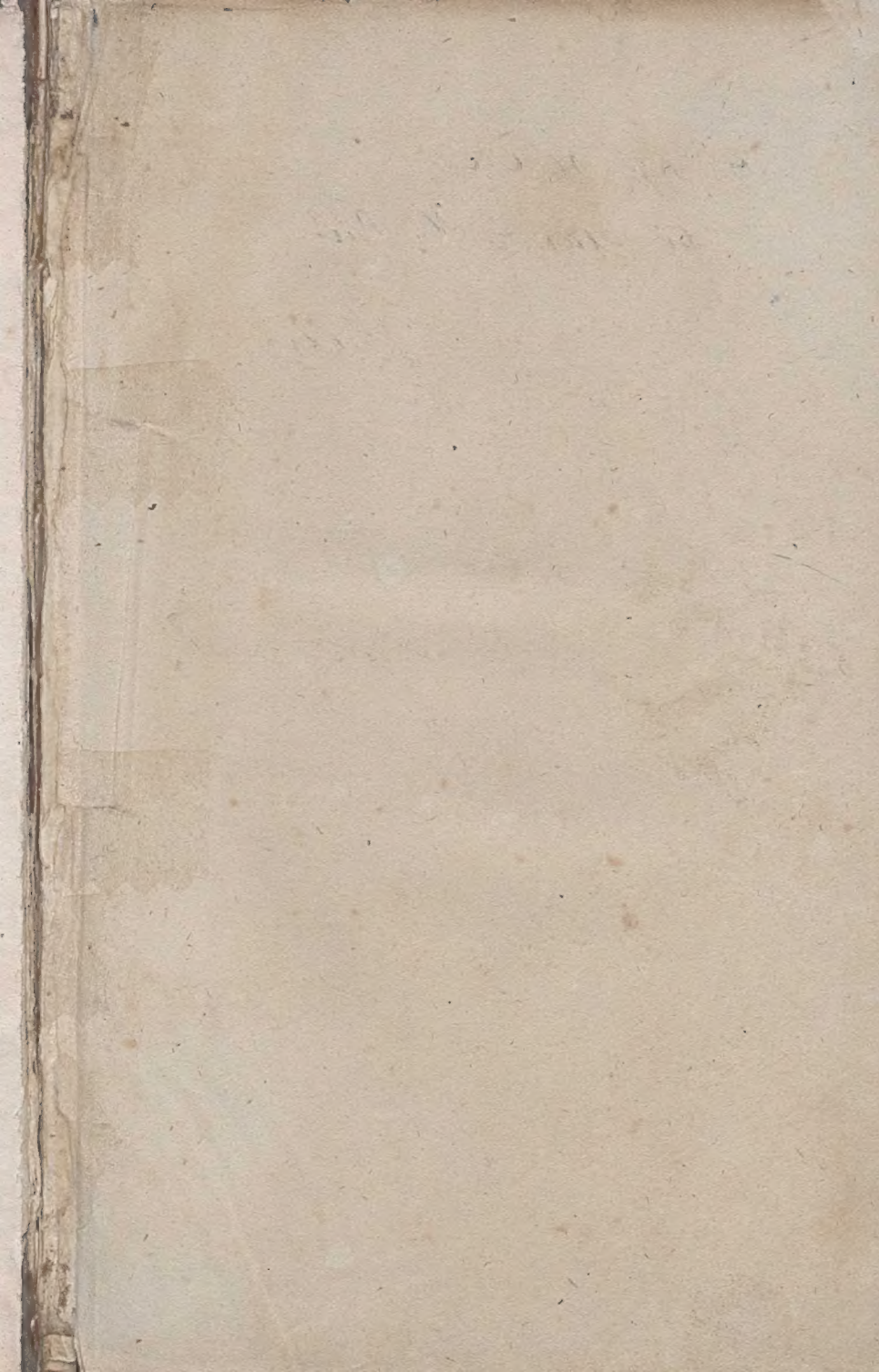
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*Presented by the author to the Soc. of
Ancient North. Lit. at Copenhagen
April 1826.*

W. Herbert.

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY.

BY

THE HON. W. HERBERT.

Landskrona

VOLUME FIRST.

2 vol

London :

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,

PATERNOSTER-ROW,

BY T. GOLD, SHOE-LANE.

1806.



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BY J. GOLD, STOKES-LANE.

1800.

ADVERTISEMENT.

INTENDING to defer the completion of my translations of old Icelandic and Danish poetry, till I shall have had an opportunity of procuring books, which are not to be found in this country, I have been induced to publish two additional parts at the instigation of several persons, who complained, that those already printed might otherwise long remain in an imperfect form. It is intended, that this part with the translations from the German, Danish, &c. (to which may be added the Darthula of Ossian) should form the first volume of Miscellaneous poetry: the additional part of Icelandic translations will complete the second. To any reviewers or individuals I shall be thankful for fair criticisms, which may be of service to me in the prosecution of my undertaking. Many errors I may have inadvertently committed; many sources of infor-

mation I may have overlooked or been unable to attain. But I deprecate an unjust and unfounded attack, which has been made upon a trifling translation by the writers of the last series of the *Critical Review*, stating that I had made it the vehicle of Jacobinism. If the author of that article had perused the whole of the little volume, upon which he has commented, he would have found that the few lines therein, of a political tendency, express distinctly the strongest detestation of such principles. I believe few men bear a more rooted antipathy, than myself, to the tenets of modern innovators and the form of republican government; that few would be more loth to circulate writings, which might tend to vitiate the mind of their reader. If he had examined the short preface to that volume, he would have found, that the very passage in *Blandina* and *Lenardo*, to which he alludes, was reprobated by me; not indeed as Jacobinical, for I think he must be a caviller, who will discover in it expressions of that nature; but as bearing “strong marks of the corrupt

taste of Germany, on which account it should perhaps have been omitted." He would also have learned, that Bürger was indebted for none of the materials of that ballad to Dryden, whose *Tancred and Sigismunda* was not, as he seems to have imagined, an original tale, but borrowed from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. The ballad contains much poetical beauty, on which account its translation was undertaken : it contains some instances of vitiated taste, which could not have been omitted, without making greater alterations, than were deemed warrantable. For my own part I am no admirer of most German productions, which are repugnant to a taste, that has been formed from infancy on the great models of classical writing. When their extravagancies are injudiciously extolled, the vow* of an excellent Italian writer presents itself to my recollec-

* "Vo' il patrio rivocar genio incostante,
O almen giurar su quelle sacre chorde
Contro il Gallo e German genio profano
Eterna fede al buon Petrarca e a Dante."

BETTINELLI.

tion ; a vow, which I wish our England would imitate, preferring the chaste apparel of her ancient poets to the meretricious garb of later wits. But, although the prevalent taste of Germany be corrupt, and fraught with moral and political turpitude, beauty may be gathered from her writers, as honey from the flower, whose root is poisonous. The only extract from German literature, in this additional part, is from Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*, which he calls a romantic tragedy. Its style has considerable merit, and the whole is less exceptionable, than many of his pieces ; but the subject is not flattering to an English reader. The Spanish poetry, which I have translated, was written by authors of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century, and has not to my knowledge before appeared in English. Several very free imitations of the prophecy of the *Tajo* have been however published ; and one of great merit by Mr. Russell, whose early promise of superior genius was blighted by untimely death ; but his ode differs widely in substance and

metre from the Spanish. I have labored to produce faithful copies ; and in that ode, as well as some others, have preserved the Spanish arrangement of rhymes. If in any passages I have too much departed from the letter of the original or falsified its style, the error has been committed inadvertently ; my principal aim has been fidelity, as far as compatible with propriety of expression and ornament of rhyme, in a different language.

1805.

WILLIAM HERBERT.



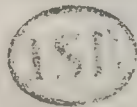
SELECT
ICELANDIC POETRY,

TRANSLATED

FROM THE ORIGINALS;

WITH NOTES.

PART FIRST.



———Opifex numeris veterum primordia vocum
Atque marem strepitum fidis intendisse.

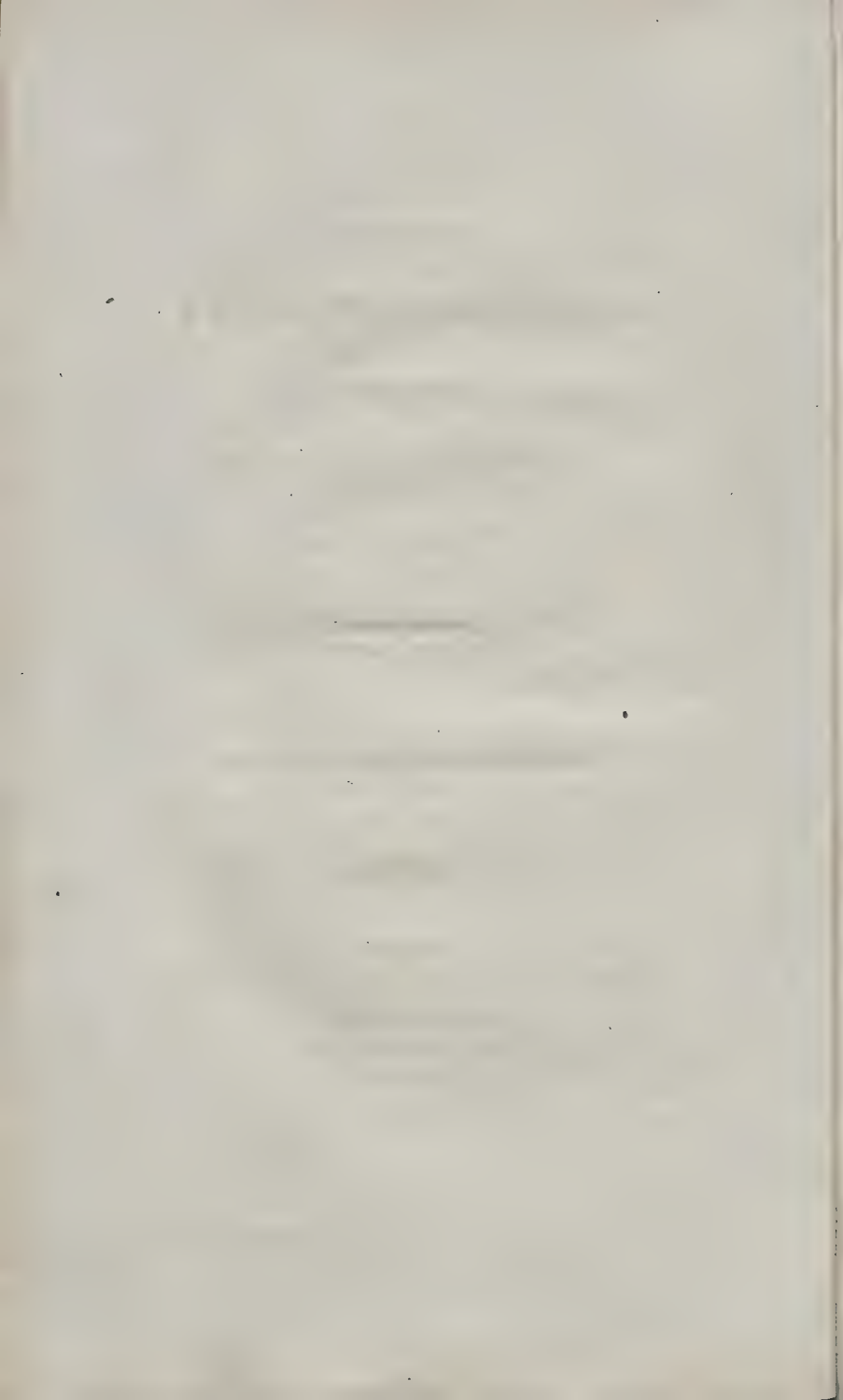
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London:

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BY J. GOLD, SHOE-LANE.

1806.

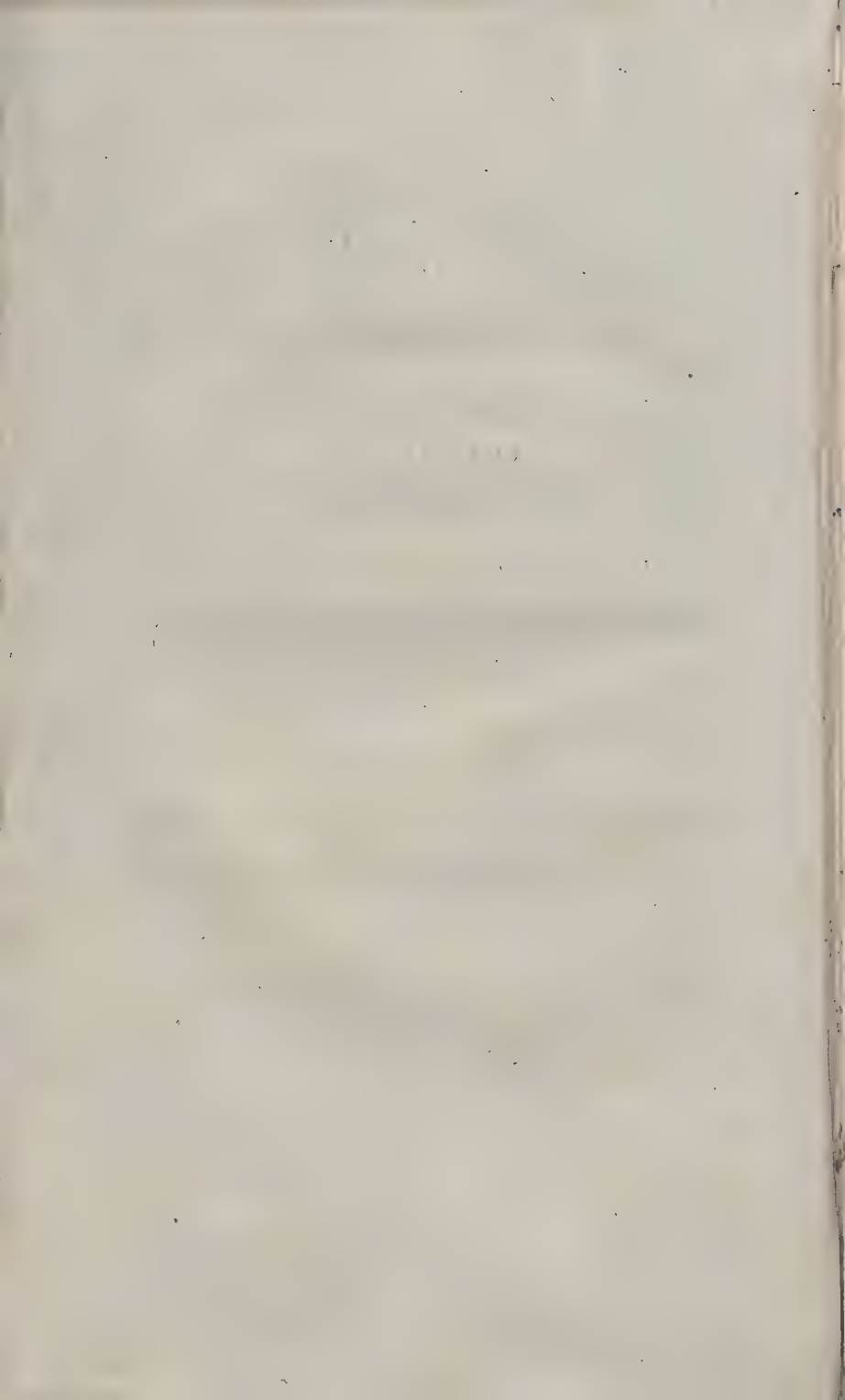


TO
THE HONORABLE C. ANKER,
OF
COPENHAGEN,
&c. &c.

THE following translations from the old tongue of his native country (which, as it is intimately allied to England in ancient blood and language, should ever continue joined to it by the closest ties of uninterrupted amity) are inscribed, as a trifling testimony of the sincerest esteem and friendship, by his faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM HERBERT.

December, 1803.



TIL HERR ANKER.

FORLADER mig, o Muser, om jeg her
Opvække tør den Danske lires sang
Först i et fremmet land ! Vel kiender jeg
Min svaghed til at synge Danmarks roes
I Danmarks skiönne sprog ! Vejleder da
Hendes indvaanere med hellig trin,
Hvor svæver den udödelige aand
Af gammel digtekunst fra Grækenland
Og den almægtige Latinske bred !
Ophöjer dem, og fylder deres bryst
Med reenhed og indbildnings-kraftens magt,
At de maa snart den ærekrone faae,

Som deres sprog fortæner ! Mig er nok,
 At jeg fra Island og fra Norges kyst
 Kan friske krands bringe til min ven,
 Og blomstre plukkede ved Engelsk haand.
 Hvor gierne vilde jeg, hvor hierteglad,
 Med dig, min ven, i Norges elskte land
 Klavre ad skov-bevoxne klipper op
 Liig indtil Kjölens spids, og Norlands kyst,
 Hialoges ældste bolig ! O hvor fri,
 O hvor fortryllet skulde jeg omkring
 Der følge vildtets spor ! og mödig, (da
 Sin hede middags solen styrter ned)
 Udstrakt nær ved en høj balstyrig fos,
 Udi den granne-skyggers mørke nat,
 Rose den pragt af en almægtig haand ;
 Som, mellem snee og tordenskyers skræk,
 Det usle hiem af et frimodigt folk

Med glæde har fornöjet ! Ædle land !
Hvori hver egn erindrer vigtig strid
Af gamle helte, eller rune-steen,
Som sönnens pligt ei uden heltesang
Lod reise til sin döde faders roes
I fordum tid, da Odins høje navn
Indblæste deres bryst ærgierrig magt,
Og det i kamp ubøjelige sind.

VILHELM HERBERT.

ADVERTISEMENT,

If this attempt should be fortunate enough to meet with the approbation of the public, it is my intention to complete a second part with an introductory account of the ancient history and literature of Iceland. The volumes, which have been printed in the Icelandic language, are numerous, though many of them are become very rare; and a great number of old manuscripts remain yet unpublished. The following poems are closely translated, and unadorned; with a few exceptions they are rendered line for line; and (I believe) as literally, as the difference of language and metrical rules would permit. For me the energetic harmony of these old poems has great charms: the most ancient are the simplest and most beautiful; for the Icelandic poetry degenerated into affectation of impenetrable obscurity and extravagant metaphors. I

conceive, that much of the value of these relicks consists in their peculiarities, and in the light, they throw on the singular manners and persuasions of the northern nations; which would be destroyed by any attempt to embellish them. The only merit, I have aimed at, is that of accuracy; if I have judged wrong, I can only say in my defence, that it would have been much easier to adorn them, than to copy faithfully.

“Quest’ anima——

Gran parte tien di sua possanza avvinta,

Nè può sempre spiegar libere l’ali

Presso i volivimmortali.”

The original verses have no final rhymes, but regular alliterations and corresponding syllables. Such was the old metre of the north; and, when rhymes were adopted, the rules of alliteration were still preserved: as in the ransom of Egill Skallagrimson;

Lof at viisa vann,

Vyst mære eg dann;

Hlieds biðium hann,

Thvæt hroður offann.

i: e. Laudem cantilena perfecit, certè carmine laudo illum; silentium
rogamus eum, nam carmen de eo excogitavi. *Worm. Lit. Run.* 208.

And in the Rimur af Karl og Grym;

Grymur kiemur a Gautalad,

Giefast mun vargi nokr brad.

Nord. Kämp. Datt.

In the proper names I have sometimes thrown aside
and sometimes retained the final *ur*, which is changed
into *s* in the genitive case; Grymur or Grym, as we
say Pompeius or Pompey.

The ancient language of the north is at present
known by the name of Icelandic, because its use is
confined to that island; though it once extended over a
large part of Europe, and is the parent of the Swedish,
the Danish, and many words in the English. Most of
the old northern writings were composed by natives of
Iceland, which was once as high in the estimation of
Europe, as it is now insignificant. "Iceland," (as a
Danish* writer has observed) "the largest island in
Europe after Great Britain, but the least serviceable in
proportion to its size, was formerly celebrated, not

* Malling, *Store og gode handlinger*, p. 411.

only for the warlike disposition of its people, but also for its excellent grass and fertile pastures, and for many other natural and well used advantages. Iceland was at that time populous, flourishing, strong, and respectable; but various circumstances, both severally and by their combined effects, occasioned its gradual decline. Inundations, crumbling of mountains, and subterraneous fires, have by degrees deteriorated many parts of the country; the eruptions of Hecla, Köthluggia, and other volcanos, destroyed whole districts; so that the surface of the earth in many places was completely altered, and beautiful meadows changed into naked tracts of sand. The want of arts, manufactures, and good municipal regulations, rendered the natives incapable of redeeming the lands, which were once laid waste, or properly cultivating those, which remained uninjured: trade in their own vessels was abandoned; the land was farmed out to foreign merchants, who naturally regarded only their private interests; the people became oppressed, spiritless, and

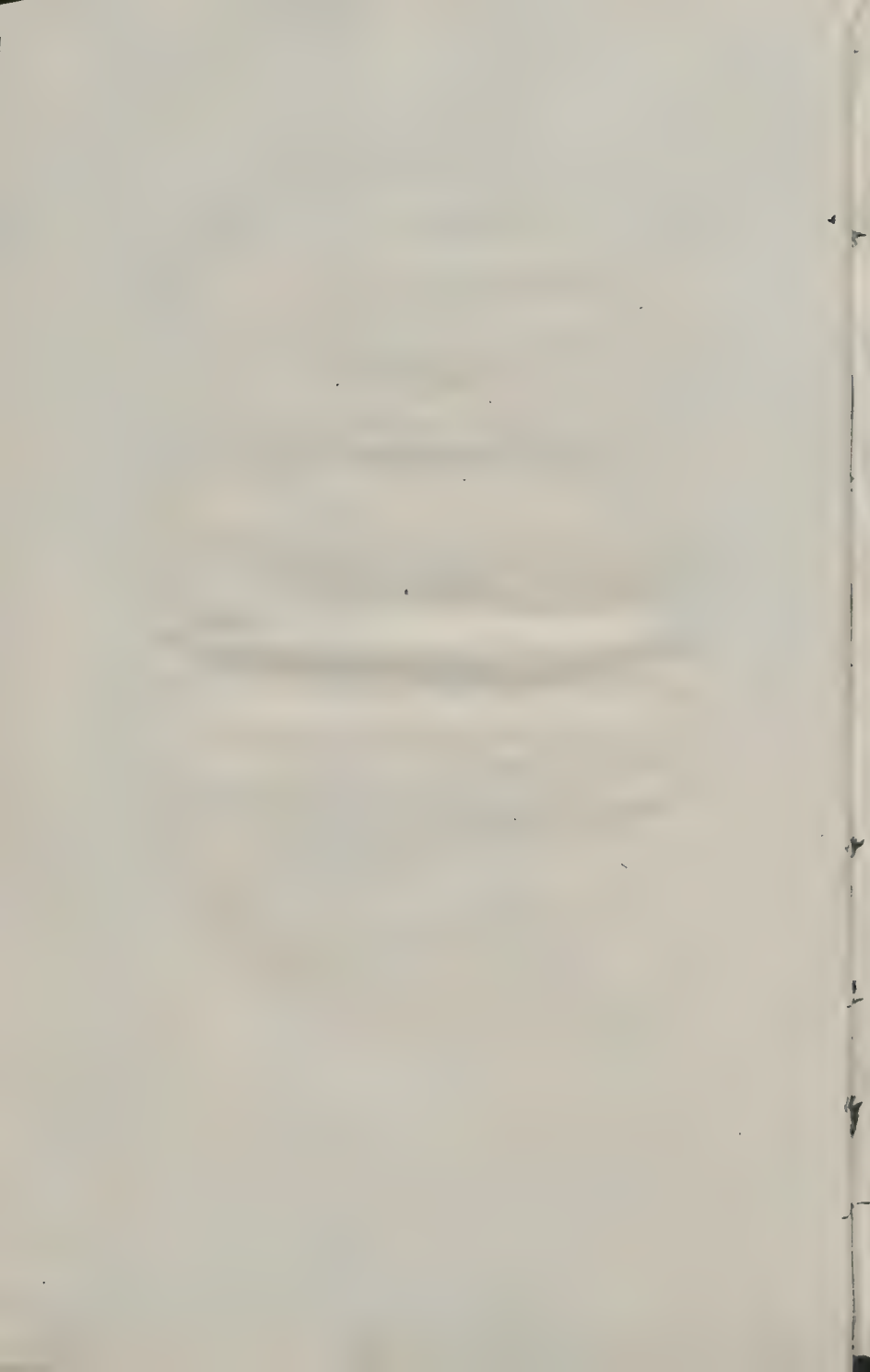
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inactive; and this was an additional cause of alteration in the state of Iceland." To these circumstances should be added the great accumulation of ice in the polar regions, which has wrought a considerable change in Greenland and North America since their first discovery by the Icelandic navigators in the tenth century, and has materially affected all the northern parts of Europe. This is a curious and interesting subject, which deserves more accurate investigation, than it has yet obtained; but it does not lie within the limits of my present undertaking.

December 1803.

I N D E X.

The song of Thrym.....	1
The battle of Hafur's bay.....	35
The descent of Odin.....	43
The dying song of Asbiörn.....	52
Gunlaug and Rafen	61
The combat of Hialmar, &c.....	71
The song of Hroke the black.....	98
The death of Hacon.....	109
Fragment of Biarkamal.....	125



ERRATA.

- P. 6. and 7. *for* meed *read* mead
- 13. l. 14. *for* own daughter, *read* daughter by Frigga.
- 21. — 5. *for* established *read* established themselves
- 25. — 8. *for* hoard *read* horde
- 34. — 2. *for* also *read* also called
- 60. — 1. *after* surpassed *insert* a comma
- 64. — 3. *dele* finally
- 112. — 59. *for* Hither he wends, *read* He comes, the prince,

NOTE OMITTED.

Song of Tbrym, v. 14. It is remarkable, that silver is here mentioned, as preferable to gold, and I believe intentionally; for gold is frequently spoken of by the old Icelandic poets, and silver very rarely. Suhm (*Hist. af Danm.* 1. 119) observes, that many utensils of gold have been dug out of the earth in the northern countries, but very few of silver.



THE
SONG
OF
THRYM;
OR,
THE RECOVERY OF THE HAMMER.

From the old Icelandic in Sæmund's Edda.

1803.

WRÓTH waxed Thor, when his sleep was flown,
And he found his trusty hammer gone;
He smote his brow, his beard he shook,
The son of earth gan round him look;
And this the first word, that he spoke; 5
“ Now listen what I tell thee, Loke;
Which neither on earth below is known,
Nor in Heaven above; my hammer's gone.”

Their way to Freyia's bower they took,
 And this the first word, that he spoke ; 10
 " Thou, Freyia, must lend a winged robe,
 To seek my hammer round the globe."

FREYIA sung.

" That shouldst thou have, though 'twere of gold,
 And that, though 'twere of silver, hold."
 Away flew Loke ; the wing'd robe sounds, 15
 Ere he has left the Asgard grounds,
 And ere he has reach'd the Jotunheim bounds.
 High on a mound in haughty state
 Thrym the king of the Thursi sate ;
 For his dogs he was twisting collars of gold, 20
 And trimming the manes of his coursers bold.

THRYM sung.

" How fare the Asi ? the Alfi how ?
 Why com'st thou alone to Jotunheim now ?"

LOKE sung.

" Ill fare the Asi ; the Alfi mourn ;
 Thor's hammer from him thou hast torn." 25

THRYM sung.

" I have the Thunderer's hammer bound,
 Fathoms eight beneath the ground;
 With it shall no one homeward tread,
 Till he bring me Freyia to share my bed."
 Away flew Loke; the wing'd robe sounds, 30
 Ere he has left the Jotunheim bounds,
 And ere he has reach'd the Asgard grounds.
 At Midgard Thor met crafty Loke,
 And this the first word, that he spoke;
 " Have you your errand and labor done? 35
 Tell from aloft the course, you run.
 For * setting off the story fails,
 And lying oft the lie prevails."

LOKE sung.

" My labor is past, mine errand I bring;
 Thrym has thine hammer, the giant king: 40
 With it shall no one homeward tread,
 Till he bear him Freyia to share his bed."

* See the note on these lines.

Their way to lovely Freyia they took,
 And this the first word, that he spoke;
 "Now, Freyia, busk, as a blooming bride; 45
 Together, we must, to Jotunheim ride."
 Wrath waxed Freyia with ireful look;
 All Asgard's hall with wonder shook;
 Her great bright necklace started wide.
 "Well may ye call me a wanton bride, 50
 If I with ye to Jotunheim ride."
 The Asi did all to council crowd,
 The Asiniæ all talk'd fast and loud;
 This they debated, and this they sought,
 How the hammer of Thor should home be brought. 55
 Up then and spoke Heimdallar free,
 Like the Vani, wise was he;
 "Now busk we Thor, as a bride so fair;
 Let him that great bright necklace wear;
 Round him let ring the spousal keys, 60
 And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,

Busk, dress.

Kirtle, a woman's garment.

And on his bosom jewels rare ;
 And high and quaintly braid his hair."
 Wrath waxed Thor with godlike pride ;
 " Well may the Asi me deride, 65
 If I let me be dight, as a blooming bride."
 Then up spoke Loke, Laufeyia's son ;
 " Now hush thee, Thor ; this must be done :
 The giants will strait in Asgard reign,
 If thou thine hammer dost not regain," 70
 Then busk'd they Thor, as a bride so fair,
 And the great bright necklace gave him to wear ;
 Round him let ring the spousal keys,
 And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,
 And on his bosom jewels rare ; 75
 And high and quaintly braided his hair.
 Up then arose the crafty Loke,
 Laufeyia's son, and thus he spoke ;
 " A servant I thy steps will tend,
 Together we must to Jotunheim wend." 80

Dight, dressed, adorned.

Now home the goats together hie ;
 Yoked to the axle they swiftly fly.
 The mountains shook, the earth burn'd red,
 As Odin's son to Jotunheim sped.
 Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said ; 85
 " Giants, stand up ; let the seats be spread :
 Bring Freyia Niorder's daughter down
 To share my bed from Noatun.
 With horns all gilt each coal-black beast
 Is led to deck the giant's feast ; 90
 Large wealth and jewels have I stored ;
 I lack but Freyia to grace my board."
 Betimes at evening they approach'd,
 And the mantling ale the giants broach'd.
 The spouse of Sifia ate alone 95
 Eight salmons, and an ox full-grown,
 And all the cates, on which women feed ;
 And drank three firkins of sparkling meed.
 Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said ;
 " Where have ye beheld such a hungry maid ? 100

Ne'er saw I bride so keenly feed,
 Nor drink so deep of the sparkling meed."
 Then forward lent the crafty Loke,
 And thus the giant he bespoke;
 " Nought has she eat for eight long nights, 105
 So did she long for the nuptial rites."
 He stoop'd beneath her veil to kiss,
 But he started the length of the hall, I wiss.
 " Why are the looks of Freyia so dire?
 It seems, as her eyeballs glisten'd with fire." 110
 Then forward lent the crafty Loke,
 And thus the giant he bespoke;
 " Nought has she slept for eight long nights,
 So did she long for the nuptial rites."
 Then in the giant's sister came, 115
 Who dared a bridal gift to claim;
 " Those rings of gold from thee I crave,
 If thou wilt all my fondness have,
 All my love and fondness have."

Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said; 120

“ Bear in the hammer to plight the maid ;

Upon her lap the bruizer lay,

And firmly plight our hands and fay.”

The Thunderer’s soul smiled in his breast,

When the hammer hard on his lap was placed ; 125

Thrym first the king of the Thursi he slew,

And slaughter’d all the giant crew.

He slew that giant’s sister old,

Who pray’d for bridal gifts so bold. .

Instead of money and rings, I wot, 130

The hammers bruises were her lot.

Thus Odin’s son his hammer got.

Fay, faith.

NOTES

ON

THE SONG OF THRYM.

THE Edda of Sæmund is a collection of old Icelandic odes, some of which are supposed to have been written before the birth of Christ. It is said to have been compiled by the learned Sæmund, who was born in Iceland in 1056; according to some, 1054 or 1057. The name of Sæmund's Edda was affixed to the manuscript in the seventeenth century by Bryniolfus Sveinonius, bishop of Skalholt. The prose Edda, attributed to Snorro Sturleson, is founded upon these poems.

Mr. Cottle has published, what he calls a translation of this ode, but it bears little resemblance to the original. Translations made, like Dr. Percy's, by a person unacquainted with the Icelandic language,

through the medium of a Latin prose version, cannot be expected to represent the style and spirit of the originals : but Mr. C. has not even taken the trouble of understanding the Latin ; otherwise he never could have translated, *Ex Noatunis*, “ Whom Noathuna calls her son ;” or, *Illicò gigantes Asgardum habitabunt*, “ Know the Asgardi sons shall reign :” or, what is more extraordinary, in the 22d stanza, *Tunc profatus est Thrymus Thursorum dynastes*,

“ Thursori ! dynasts of this sphere !”

(Thor began approaching near)

and in the 20th, *Tunc profatus est Lokius Loveyia natus* ; “ Abstine, Thore, istorum verborum.”

“ Care not for that, Loveyia’s son !”

Lok in quick reply begun.

In the three last mentioned passages Mr. C. appears to have confounded the nominative with the accusative ; which is not improbable, as he has given Thursori for the nominative of Thursorum. In the thirteenth stanza he has represented Freyia as consenting

to go instead of refusing, which destroys the sense of all, that follows.

V. 1. "*Thor.*" Thor was worshipped by the Norwegians, as the most powerful of the Gods. His favorite weapon was a hammer, which was shaped like a cross. The following passages are translated from Peringskiöld's Uplandic monuments relative to a Runestone, on which this hammer is represented. "Johannes Magnus Goth. Sveon. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 9. pag. 30. och brodren Olaus Magni, lib. 3. cap. 3. pag. 100. afbildar Thor med en spira, &c." *i. e.* "Johannes Magnus, &c. and his brother Olaus, &c. represent Thor with a sceptre in his right hand, and twelve stars round his head. Others give Thor also a cruciform thunderbolt in his left hand, and seven stars over his head. Thor's hammer is described in the Eddas with the additional name of *miolner*; viz. in Sturleson's, &c. it may be seen, that Thor the son of Odin amongst his chattels possessed the hammer *miolner*, which the *Rimthussi* and mountain

sorcerers knew to their cost. When Thor dressed himself, he took the hammer *miolner*, lifted up and brandished it. Thor struck the hammer against the head of the giant *Skrymner*; another time Thor threw the hammer after *Yme* the sorcerer, and broke his head, &c."

"The mark of the hammer with its handle upon the Runestone at *Roby* is seven spans, as the length of a moderate sceptre requires. The ancient inhabitants of this country did not use a sceptre with lilies, but with a cross upon it, or like the trident of Neptune. The shape of Thor's hammer in the time of paganism was exactly a cross; for when king *Hacon* sacrificed with the Heathens in Norway, and was forced to drink out of the offering cup, he made the Christian sign of the cross before his mouth; but this was interpreted by his heathen subjects, as if he had made the sign of Thor's hammer before his mouth, and so made the holy libation to the God Thor. The king's governors and ministers had formerly permis-

sion to use the representation of Thor's hammer or a cross, to shew the might and power entrusted to them. In former times, when the people were convened by the king to the public assembly and court of judicature, the hammer of Thor was used amongst the Heathens for sign and summons; but, when they became Christians, a cross of wood was adopted in its stead, which was sent round the villages. See Angr. Jon. lib. 1. Rerum Island. c. 7. and Stephan. in Sax. Gram. p. 250." *Peringskiöld's Uplandic Monuments. Stockh. 1710. pag. 255.*

Thor is stated in the Edda (*Göranson's edition, p. 22.*) to have been the son of Odin and Jorth, the earth, who was his own daughter.

V. 4. "*The son of earth.*" Jardar bur, one of Thor's appellations.

V. 6. "*Loke.*" The son of Laufey or Laufeyia, was one of the Asi.

V. 9. "*Freyia.*" The daughter of Niorder of the nation of the Vani. "Tha er Niördur var meth Vö-

nom, &c." *i. e.* "Whilst Niorder was amongst the Vani, he had espoused his sister; for that was according to their law. Frey and Freyia were their children. But amongst the Asi it was forbidden to marry such near relations." *Ynglinga Saga*, c. 4.

V. 16. "*Asgard.*" As-gard means the abode of the Asi, who were the countrymen of Odin. Suhm in his *Historie af Danmark* (v. 1. p. 17.) considers, that there were three Odins. The first, son of Bør of the nation of the Asi, who dwelt in the old Asgard at the mouth of the Tanais, introduced the worship of the Sun, and after his death was deified by his countrymen. The second, son of Heremod, a descendant of the old Odin, fled before Darius at the time of his expedition against the Scythians, built the new Asgard near the Duna, and inhabited the country between that river and the Veissel. From thence he passed over into Sweden, and waged war against all the Jotuns, who would not acknowledge him to be their God and the offspring of the Sun. Lastly came the third

Odin, son of Fridleif, from old Asgard about 50 years before the birth of Christ, stopped some time at the new Asgard, and from thence proceeded to Sweden, where he dwelt at Sigtuna, and built a temple at Upsala, which became his principal residence. It is the opinion of some writers, that Upsala itself is sometimes called Asgard; and it seems very probable, that this name was applied to the metropolis of the Asi, in whatever country they sojourned. In his observations on Saxo Grammaticus, which are printed in the eleventh volume of his *Samlede skrifter*, Suhm is contented with two Odins. The following passage, which gives a very plausible solution of some of the difficulties, that occur in the Northern mythology, is translated from thence. “It was not difficult for Odin to make the progress, which he did in the North; for he gave out, that he and his companions were the very Gods, who were already worshipped there. For this must be observed, that I reckon more, than one Odin. Saxo himself speaks in this place of a Mit-Odin, that

is a middle Odin, from which we may conclude, that he believed, there were three. But I hold, that not more than two are necessary. The first inhabitants of the North came undoubtedly out of Asia, from the countries situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian. That is the reason, that the name Aser is found in our old histories, and the last Odin improperly took the name of As. Whether some men, called Odin, Thor, and so forth, were amongst the first, I shall not attempt to say; but thus much is certain, that by Thor was understood the supreme Deity, and by Odin the Sun. The last Odin, whether he bore that name before, or adopted it after his arrival, sometimes gave himself out to be the Deity Odin, and, as he was the most eminent of his party, sometimes also to be the first and supreme God. Perhaps at the commencement he met with people, who were acquainted with the God Odin only; for otherwise it would have been as easy for him to have called himself Thor; but, when he had once established himself as Odin, it was necessary to adhere

to that. Hence sprung the diversity of notions in our mythology: for Odin induced some to believe, that he was the supreme God; some on the contrary could not be brought to this, but, as his exploits were great in war, they conceived, that he was the God of battle, which others thought to be either Thor, or Tyr. But some held him in such abhorrence, that they considered him as a God indeed, (for they had felt his might too much to deny this) but as a wicked God; and they reckoned, that he was the evil, and Thor on the other hand the good being. The seat of Thor was principally in Norway, where it does not seem, that the arms of Odin made great progress. The true seat of Odin was in Sweden. Before his time, according to my opinion, the great northern peninsula and its inhabitants had no special name amongst the natives themselves, excepting, that the northern division was called *Nor-riget*, or the north kingdom, and the southern *Syd-riget*, or the south kingdom; from which the names *Norvegia*, *Norvegi*, *Normanni*, *Suionia*, *Suiones*, are

derived; whence Norige, corruptly Nerigon, is found in Pliny, and Suiones in Tacitus. The large and tall people are called in our language Riser, from which perhaps the Russians acquired their name; Jetter, which according to different pronunciations was changed to Jyder, Gauter, Geater, and Gother; (by which last name a German nation near the Baltic, introduced by the last Odin, was particularly called in ancient times) and Kiæmper, which the Romans changed into Cimbri, or Kimbri. It is certain, that our old history and mythology has been very much perplexed by confounding the elder Odin and Thor with the later." *Suhms samlede skrifter*, 11. 146.

I have subjoined an extract from the old Icelandic Rymbegla, in which Odin is called the son of Thor. It is not singular, that so much diversity should appear in the accounts of Odin's parents, as there were evidently more, than one Odin, and the object of the last was to conceal the whole of his real history. "Upphaf allra frásagna í Norrænni tungu theirra," &c.

v. c. “ All the accounts in the northern tongue, which adhere to truth, commence at the time, when the Turks and Asiatics settled in the north; whence it may be truly said, that the language, which we call Northern, came with them here into the North, and spread over Saxony, Denmark, and Sweden, Norway, and some parts of England. The leader of these people was Odin the son of Thor; he had many sons. Many trace their descent from Odin; he established his sons in the country, and made them rulers over it. One of his sons was named Skiolldur, who took to himself the land, now called Denmark; but at that time those lands, which the Asiatics inhabited, were called the lands of the Gods, and the nation the people or race of the Gods. Boundaries were fixed between Skiolldur and his brother Ingfreir, who dwelt in the kingdom now called Sweden. Odin and his sons were very wise and deeply learned, beautiful in countenance, and mighty in strength. Many others of their race were men of great eminence with various perfections; and the

people took some of them to worship and believe in, and called them their Gods." *Rymbegla*, 3. 1. p. 316.

Having mentioned the various countries, in which was spoken the ancient language of Odin, now called the Icelandic, it may not be improper to add the following translation of a passage in Baron Holberg's reign of king Canute concerning its prevalence in England. "It is to be remarked, that various languages were used in Great Britain from the first arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. The English tongue, or that, which was spoken by the Angli, differed very little from the Danish, because the Angli came from Jutland, on which account their language was also called by ancient writers Cimbric or Gothic. This language was spoken in the provinces, which lay north of the river Thames, as the Saxon was in the south. Although they differed from each other, yet the distinction was not so great, but that each of them could be understood by both nations, the Angli and the Saxons. These languages flourished together in the country, till the heptarchy was

abolished and the seven small kingdoms united; for then the Saxon began to prevail together with the Saxon kings, and the English or Danish fell gradually into disuse. But afterwards, when a new swarm of Danes established in the country, the Danish came into use again, although it was not the same, which the Angli or South Jutlanders had brought with them; so that there may be reckoned three distinct tongues besides the British or Welsh language, namely the English or old Danish, the Saxon, and the new Danish, which last was principally spoken in Northumberland, East Anglia, and Mercia, of which the Danes had gained possession. At last, as the Danish was the language of the court under Canute the great and his two successors, the other provinces, even the West Saxons, were forced to accustom themselves to the Danish dialect then in fashion; so that the old West Saxon tongue was corrupted by the Danish, as we now see the Danish corrupted and likely to be completely changed by the German, which is at present the court language

of the country. For the court is the principal school for language, as all affect to speak the same, or at least attempt to introduce words or expressions from it into the general tongue. So it happened with the Danish under the three Danish kings: but when their rule had ended, and Edward the Confessor acceded to the throne, the Saxon became the language of the court again, until William the conqueror gained possession of England, and introduced the Norman tongue, which was a mixture of Danish and French. The English of the present day is a composition of all these languages." *Holbergs Dannemarks riges Historie*, 1. 150.

V. 17. "*Jotunheim*." }
 V. 19. "*Thursi*." } The situation of Jotun-

heim is supposed to have been north east of the Baltic, and to have extended from the White Sea even to the north western coast of Norway, where Helgeland was inhabited by a nation of this race. They were indiscriminately called by the names of Jotni, or Jæ-

ter, and Thursi, Riser, Kiæmper, (whence the old English word Kemp and Kemperye man, a soldier) and several others expressive of their size and ferocity. Angrim Jonas, who was fully convinced of the gigantic bulk of the ancient inhabitants of the north before the time of Odin, is very desirous of establishing their descent from the Canaanites, who were routed by Joshua, which he has labored at length to prove in the first book of his *Crymogæa*. After enumerating the most conspicuous giants of the north, (the last of whom, fifteen cubits high, is said to have been killed by king Magnus Erichson in 1338) to shew how wide they extended in earlier times he continues, “*Adde, quòd provincia quædam Norvegiæ seu Finmarkiæ contermina Risaland (id est, gigantum terra, nam en rise et rese gigantem significat) antiquitus dicta est; a quâ non longe abest Jötum heimar, id est, gigantum habitatio; (unde etiamnum en Jæt gigas dicitur) ut nihil dicam de Jötumland, quo nomine nostratibus dicebatur olim, quæ hodie vocatur Jutland, et complu-*

ribus etiam Cimbrorum terra seu Chersonesus; eo quoque nomine facto a Kemper, id est, gigantibus pugnantibus." *Crymogæa*, p. 42. Schöning, who completely agrees with Angrim Jonas as to the reality of their immense size, rejects the idea of their coming into the north from Canaan; for which indeed there is no ground, but the similarity of their bulk, and the letter th in their language, which is supposed to be of Hebrew origin. Schöning reckons, that they were descendants of the Thussagetæ, which he considers to be compounded from Thursi or Thussi (for they are sometimes called Hrim-thussi or cold Thussi) and Jotner or Jeter; and supposes them to have been first driven from their old habitations at the time of the famous expedition of Darius against the Scythians. They were originally connected with the tribes, which Odin afterwards led to the same countries in consequence of the violence of Mithridates, and spoke the same language. See *Schönings nordiske folkes oprindelse*, p. 157. It is certainly probable, that the first

inhabitants of the north were of superior strength and stature, accustomed, as they must have been, from the rugged nature of the climate and country, to a hardy and fearless life, and at the time of their first establishment amply supplied with animal food to encrease their bulk, and enable them to contend with the severity of the seasons. When Odin invaded the same regions with a second hoard of settlers, he resolved to exterminate those, whom he could not subdue, or win over to his party; and he therefore represented them to his followers as miscreated monsters and sorcerers; and all the accounts of their enormous stature, which probably had some foundation, were naturally exaggerated by their opponents.

V. 22. "*Alfi.*" The Edda of Snorro gives the following account of Alfheim, and its inhabitants, who were inferior to the Asi or Gods, and held the rank of secondary divinities; and from their name is derived our word Elf. The Latin writers have thought proper to call them Fauni, from a prevailing desire of

identifying the Roman and Scandinavian mythology. "Sa er thar stadr," &c. *i. e.* "There is a place, which is called Alfheim; there dwell a people hight Liosalfar or Light Alfs; but the Dauckalfar or Dark Alfs inhabit under ground, and they are unlike the others in appearance, and still more unlike in fact. The Light Alfs are whiter in appearance, than the Sun; but the Dark Alfs more swarthy, than pitch." *Göransson's Edda*, p. 34. The Alfi were in fact a tribe related to the Asi, and inhabited the province of Fahlus, a part of Norway now belonging to Sweden.

V. 27. "*Fathom.*" Raustom. It is not known exactly, what this measure is; though probably much more, than a fathom: but the precise depth is of no importance.

V. 33. "*Midgard.*" The boundary between the Asi and Jotuns or giants, The following account of it is given in the Edda of Snorro.—"Kringlott er jorth," &c. *i. e.* The earth is circular, and a deep sea lies round it; and on the shores they (the sons of

Bör, viz. Odin, Vili, and Ve) gave a habitation to the giants; but in front within the earth they made a town against the attacks of the giants, and for this purpose they used the eyebrows of Yme, and called the town Midgard. They cast his brains into the air, and made the clouds of them; as is here stated :

Of Yme's flesh was the earth created,
 Of his sweat the sea, the hills of his bones,
 The meadows of his hair, and of his head the heaven,
 And of his eyebrows the blithe Gods made
 Midgard for the sons of men, and of his brains
 Were all the hard-tempered clouds created.

When the sons of Bör walked on the sea strand, they found two trees, and of these they formed mankind. The first gave breath, the second life, the third hearing and sight; and the man was called Askr and the woman Emla. From them sprung mankind, to whom a habitation was given under Midgard. After that they made Asgard in the middle of the world. There dwelt Odin, and the race of those, from whom our race is

descended." *Göranssons Edda*, p. 20. See also *Schönings nordiske folkes oprindelse*, p. 101, &c.

V. 37, and 38.) "Opt sitianda saugor um fallaz,
Ok liggiandi l'gyi um bellir."

These lines are translated literally. It is probably an old proverbial saying, and seems to mean, that, if Loke waited till he sat down, he might forget half his story; and, if he waited till he had slept upon it, he would probably invent a false one.

V. 53. "*Asiniæ*." The wives and daughters of the Asi.

V. 56. "*Heimdallar*." Literally, Heimdallar, the whitest of the Asi. He was the son of Odin, from whom he received the kingdom of Scania. "Heimdallar was called the *white God*; he is great and holy; he was *the son of nine virgins, all sisters*. He is the sentinel of the Gods, and sits at the extremity of heaven to guard the bridge against the mountain-giants. He requires less sleep, than a bird; he sees by night, as well as by day, a hundred miles (*rasta*) before him; he

hears the grass grow on the earth, and the wool on the flocks, and every thing, that sounds. He has a trumpet, which is called Giallarhorn, and its blast is heard throughout the world." See *Göranssons Edda*, p. 44. This probably meant, that he was the God of light, which springs from the nine heavens or worlds, as they are numbered in *Vafthrudnismal*, "nió kom ec heima fyr niðhel nedan." *i. e.* I have visited nine worlds above the abyss of hell.

V. 57. "*Vani*." The Vani were a nation, who dwelt near the river Tanais, which in the old northern tongue was called the Vana, and they extended towards the Volga. See *Yngl. Sag.* c. 1. Before the emigration of Odin a long war had been carried on between the Vani and their neighbours the Asi, which, after a dubious contest, terminated in peace and exchange of hostages. Njord and his son Frey were hostages from the Vani, and they accompanied Odin into the north. See *Yngl. Sag.* c. 4. The Vani had the character of superior wisdom and learning, as appears also in *Scirnis-för* in

the old Edda, where Gerdur asks Scirner, whether he comes from the Alfi, the Asi, or the wise Vani. "Hvat er that A'lsa, ne A'sa sona, ne víska Vana?" The same epithet is applied to them in Vafthrudnismál. Schöning reckons, that they were a Grecian colony, and on this account superior to their neighbours in learning. See *N. F. Oprindelse*, p. 268.

V. 60. It was customary to hang the keys to the waist of the bride, to shew, that the management of the household was intrusted to her.

V. 82. "Thor possesses two goats and a chariot; the goats are called Tangmoster and Tangsnir (or Tangrisner). When he goes to Jotunheim, Thor drives the chariot, which is drawn by them; and on that account he is called Auko-Thor." See *Göranssons Edda*, p. 38.

V. 88. "*Noatun*." The habitation of Niorder. See *Göranssons Edda*, p. 40. *Engl. Sag.* c. 5. and *Grimnismál*, st. 16.

V. 91. "*Jewels*." In the original *menia*, necklaces.

or bracelets. It means the gold and jewels taken in battle from the spoils of the enemy, and perhaps had some reference to the celebrated necklace of Freyia. Rings seem to have been used amongst the ancient inhabitants of the north for money. In the lamentation of Sterkader he calls himself *Hringa vana*, without rings; by which he means without money. The same connexion between rings and money may be observed in this ode, where the giant's sister asks for rings, and in the last stanza it is said, that she received blows instead of rings and money. *Baugr*, a ring, which is the same as the French word *baguë*, is also used to express money in Icelandic. See *Hacónarmál*, and *Orkneyinga Saga*, p. 156. They seem to have been universally worn by warriors, and of course formed a valuable part of the booty. A very curious account of the regulations, under which the spoil was divided, is found in the thirty-eighth chapter of *Hirðskraa*, from which the following passage is translated. "Now shall it be told, how the spoil shall be divided

after battle, if God gives both victory and booty. This is the ancient custom of the king and the Birkibeini, to make a full tythe of all the plunder, and not withdraw any thing. First shall they blow to council, in whatever place may seem best. The standard bearer shall carry the king's standard there, and let make a circular enclosure, and the standard shall be placed in the middle. This is the ancient form of words; "What bearest thou to the spear?" Every man shall bear to the spear, whatever booty he has got, and swear, that he has not secreted any thing, and knows not, that any other has. Twelve men, whom the king names to divide the plunder, shall separate all, that is brought to the spear, first into halves, then into quarters, and afterwards each quarter again into halves. But those of the principal men and pilots, whom the king names, shall divide the whole suite first into halves, and then into quarters. Then shall lots be laid in the bosoms of each quarter; and they shall chuse first, whose lot comes up first; and so every one.

as his lot falls, till each man shall have got his share." And in the same chapter; "It is the custom of the court not to despoil a dead body, but to leave on it both shirt and breeches. Yet is it right to take silver, if there is any upon it. But whoever strips a body more, than aforesaid, shall be fined, as follows." &c. See *Hird-skraa*, p. 286.

The Birkibeini (as may be seen in the seven last chapters of *Heimskringla*) were a miscellaneous banditti, who first made their appearance in the thirteenth year of the reign of king Magnus Erlingson in the twelfth century under the auspices of Eysteirn (or Augustin), a supposed son of king Eysteirn, who layed claim to the crown of Norway. Being overpowered by the natives in the northern parts of Norway, which they had pillaged, they betook themselves to the woods and desert places; where they clothed themselves with the bark of trees, from which their name was derived.

V. 96. "*The spouse of Sifia.*" Thor. "In the northern hemisphere Thor espoused a prophetess, whose name was Sibil; but we call her Sif." See

Göransson's Edda, p. 5. Thor was at all times extremely voracious. In Hymis-qvida, where he is also the spouse of Sifia, he eats two oxen for supper.

“ A't Siliarr verr, athr sofa gengi,

Einn med aulio eyxn tva Hým[']is.” *St.* 15.

V. 108. Sandvig, who has translated this ode into Danish, appears to me to have misunderstood this line, in which he makes Thor start, instead of Thrym. “ Thor sprang langs udaf den lange sal.” p. 190. In the original it is *hann*, he, and it undoubtedly refers to the astonishment of Thrym on discovering the savage countenance of Thor under the veil.

V. 126. “ *Slaughter'd*.” In the Icelandic, lamdi: whence the vulgar word, to lam, which is still in use.

V. 130. & 131. “ Hon skell um hlaut fur skillínga,
En hangg hamars fur hringa fiöld.”

“ She got blows instead of skillings, (a coin nearly answering to a halfpenny) and strokes of the hammer instead of many rings.” This seems to be the origin of our old proverb, “ to get more kicks than halfpence.”

THE
BATTLE
OF
HAFUR'S BAY,
A. D. 885.

*From the old Icelandic by Hornklof, printed in Heimskringla,
Per. ed. v. 1. p. 93. Schön. ed. v. 1. p. 95.*

1803.

Loud in Hafur's echoing bay
Heard ye the battle fiercely bray,
'Twixt Kiotva rich, and Harald bold!
Eastward sail the ships of war;
The graven bucklers gleam afar, 5
And monstrous heads adorn the prows of gold.

Glittering shields of purest white;
And swords, and Celtic falchions bright,
And western chiefs the vessels bring:
Loudly scream the savage rout, 10
The maddening champions wildly shout,
And long and loud the twisted hauberks ring.

Firm in fight they proudly vie
 With him, whose might will gar them fly,
 Imperial Utstein's warlike head. 15
 Forth his gallant fleet he drew,
 Soon as the hope of battle grew,
 But many a buckler brast, ere Ilaklang bled.

Fled the lusty Kiotva then
 Before the fair-hair'd king of men, 20
 And bade the islands shield his flight.
 Warriors wounded in the fray
 Beneath the thwarts all gasping lay,
 Where headlong cast they mourn'd the loss of light.

Gall'd by many a missive stone 25
 ('Their golden shields behind them thrown)
 Homeward the grieving soldiers speed;
 Fast from Háfur's bay they hie;
 East-mountaineers 'o'er Jadar fly,
 And thirst for goblets of the sparkling mead.

Brast, broke with noise. *Thwarts*, benches for the rowers.

N O T E S

ON

THE BATTLE OF HAFUR'S BAY.

HEIMSKRINGLA. This valuable history of Norway (so called from its first words, Kringla heimsins, *i. e.* orbis terrarum) was written by Snorro Sturleson, a noble Icelander, who was born in 1178, and died by a violent death in 1241, having stood pre-eminent amongst his countrymen in rank, situation, wealth, and learning. The first part, which is called Ynglinga saga, gives a short account of Odin and his eldest descendants; but the reigns of the later kings, from the time of Halfdan father of Harald Harfager to the defeat of the Birkibeini by Magnus Erlingson in 1177, are fully detailed. The work of Snorro, like most Icelandic writings, contains many quotations from the old historical poets, who recorded the expeditions, in which they generally accompanied their princes, and from

whose works, collated and corrected by oral tradition, this excellent history was compiled. It was first printed in 1697, in two vols. fol. at Stockholm by Peringskiöld, and afterwards at Copenhagen in three vols. fol. by Schöning and Thorlacius.

These lines were written by Thornbiörn Hornklof, one of the Scalds of Harald Harfager, who was the founder of the Norwegian monarchy. Harald had inherited some provinces from his father Halldan, and the following singular circumstance first excited him to reduce all the petty kingdoms under his dominion. Eric prince of Hordaland had a daughter called Gyda, equally distinguished for beauty and spirit. Her fame had reached the ears of Harald, who was passionately fond of women; and, little expecting to be rejected, he sent ambassadors to conduct her to his court. “I will not” (replied the haughty Gyda to his messengers) “so cast away my virginity, as to take for husband a prince, who possesses only a few provinces; and wonderful it seems to me, that no prince has spirit enough

to unite all Norway under his dominion, and to rule over it, as king Gorm rules in Denmark, and king Eric at Upsala. Tell king Harald, that on this condition alone will I consent to become his bride, that he shall for my sake subdue the whole of Norway, and govern it with the same free power, that is held in Denmark by Gorm, or by Eric in the kingdom of Sweden." (See *Heimskringla*, and *Schön. N. Hist.*)

Roused by this spirited answer, king Harald awoke, as from a dream; and made, according to the singular custom of the time, a solemn vow, never to clip or comb his hair, till he should have extended his sway over the whole country. His talents were equal to the arduous task, which he undertook: prudent, steady, and always victorious, he proceeded from province to province, ever keeping in view the great object of universal conquest. Alarmed at length by his continual success, the provinces of Hordaland, Rogaland, Agder, and Thylemark, formed under Kiotva the rich, prince of Agder, and his son Haklang, a powerful

league to resist his progress. A great battle was fought in 885, and they were completely defeated by Harald in Hafur's bay, on the coast of Jadar, a province immediately south of the port of Stavanger in Norway. After this victory his empire was established over the whole country, and none remained sufficiently powerful to contend with him; but many emigrated to the north of Sweden, or settled in Iceland, which had been lately discovered, and was uninhabited.

V. 6. "*Monstrous heads, &c.*" Such is king Haco's ship described to have been in the account of the Norwegian expedition against Scotland in 1263. "Til thessarar ferdar, &c. *i. e.* During this voyage king Haco had that great vessel, which he had caused to be constructed at Bergen. It was built entirely of oak, and contained twenty-seven banks of oars. It was ornamented with heads and necks of dragons beautifully overlaid with gold." *Johnstone, p. 24.*

V. 9. "*Western chiefs.*" By these lines it seems, that Kiotva received some assistance from France or the British Isles.

V. 10. "*Savage.*" Ulfhedner, properly wolflike; so called from their fierceness, or from wearing the skins of wolves.

V. 15. "*Ustein.*" One of the palaces, in which Harald was wont to reside.

V. 18. "*Brast.*" Icelandic, *bresta*. The use of this word cannot be better exemplified, than by the famous answer of Einar to Olave Trygvason, king of Norway, in the fatal battle, in which that valiant champion of Christianity was overpowered with his small squadron by Earl Eric and the kings of Denmark and Sweden, on his return from Vindland (which included Meklenburg and Pomerania) in the year 1000. His followers defended themselves with desperate resolution, and the Danish and Swedish fleets were repulsed; but Eric vigorously renewed the attack with his Norwegians. Einar, an expert bowman in king Olave's ship, had aimed at him twice. The first arrow flew by his head, the second between his arm and body; Einar had put a third arrow to the bow, which probably would have proved fatal, and

turned the fortune of the day, when the string was struck by a broad-pointed weapon, and broke with noise. "What brast?" said Olave, who heard the sound. "Norway from thine hands, King!" replied Einar. King Olave was vexed, and answered, "That must God decide, not thy bow." Then the fight waxed hotter, and most of the principal men in the king's ship were slain, and the quarters so thinned, that Einar and his followers boarded the vessel, and rushed on like savage wolves. See *Olaf Tryg. Sag.* c. 69. *Reenh.*

V. 20. "*Fair-hair'd king.*" Harald Harfager.

V. 26. "*Golden shields.*" Svafnis salnæfrar, literally the tiles of the hall of Odin; which are here used for gilt shields. In *Grimnismal*, st. 9. it is stated, that the ceiling or roof of Odin's hall was made with shields, and the benches covered with coats of mail. These lines are quoted in the *Edda*, as written by Thiodolph, a poet of great reputation, who flourished at the same time as *Hörnklof*. See *Göranssons edition*, p. 9. where their meaning has been completely misunderstood by the translator.

VEGTAM's SONG;

OR,

THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

1803.

THE Gods did all to council crowd,
The Goddesses talk'd fast and loud;
And this the theme of their debate,
If Balder's dreams were big with fate.
Heavy the hero's slumbers were, 5
Joy seem'd in sleep to disappear;
To mystic shrines the giants press,
And ask, if this bodes new distress.
The shrines have said, that Uller's* friend,
The loveliest, to death must tend: 10
Frigga and Suafner † grieving hear,
And Gods debate with anxious fear;
They send, and sue all things to seal
The peace with oaths for Balder's weal:

* Balder.

† A name for Odin.

All nature swore to hold from strife; 15
 Friggà took pledges for his life.
 Yet did the Lord * of slaughter fear,
 The sprites of joy must disappear;
 He call'd the Gods, and counsel sought;
 But each proposed a different thought. 20
 " Uprose † the king of men with speed,
 And saddled strait his coal-black steed."

&c. &c. &c.

See Gray's poems.

* Odin.

† *Literally*, Uprose Odin, guardian of mankind,

And on Sleipner he laid the saddle.

Thence he rode to the lowest abyss of hell.

&c. &c.

N O T E

ON

VEGTAM'S SONG.

THE foregoing lines are the commencement of an old Icelandic ode in Sæmund's Edda, of which the remainder has been beautifully imitated by Gray. His translation was made from the quotation in Bartholinus, (Ant. Dan.) who did not publish the whole poem; but these stanzas are almost necessary to make the rest intelligible; and on this account I have translated them closely, to serve as an introduction to that excellent fragment. An imitation of the whole ode has been published by Mr. Cottle in a volume entitled * *Sæmund's Edda translated into English verse*; but Mr. Cottle has taken such liberties with the Icelandic poetry and mythology, which in some places he has purposely amplified, and in others misunderstood. that,

* This is a great mistake; for the volume, which Mr. C. has translated, does not comprehend half Sæmund's Edda, and professes only to contain the mythological Odes not published by Resenius.

if he had published his work as original, he could scarcely have been accused of plagiarism. It may be sufficient to quote his translation of the third and fourth stanzas of this ode, to shew how much he has departed from the original. The literal translation of the Icelandic words would be, "The oracles have said, that the friend of Uller singularly lovely was doomed to die. That gave sorrow to Frigga and Suafner, and the other Gods; they came to a decision, that they should send out to all things, and sue for peace, not to hurt Balder. All nature gave oath to abstain. Frigga took the oaths and promises of all;" which Mr. C. has thus amplified:

"The sacred oracles declare—
 Balder must for death prepare!
 As! sad the tidings hear;
 Frigga drops the impassion'd tear,
 Dignify'd in silent grief,
 Odin seeks not such relief:
 But deeply ponders in his mind,
 Safety for his son to find.

Let us, he cry'd, forbid to fly
 'The stormy powers, that rule the sky ;
 League with the light'nings ; thunders chain ;
 And quell the uprising, angry main :
 Lest, mission'd by the powers of fate,
 They in direful ambush wait.
 For Balder, Odin, thus afraid,
 Peace with willing nature made ;
 And every jarring element
 For once harmoniously consent." *p. 217.*

Mr. Cottle's ode begins, "The morn was up; the blast blew loud;" and ends thus,

"Muspelli their banners raise,

"And Surtur wrap the world in blaze."

There is nothing similar to these lines in the original, and the Muspelli and Surtur are not even alluded to; but they have been drawn out of a Latin note in the Copenhagen edition, to be placed in the text. Gray's beautiful imitation is sufficiently close, except in a few passages, where he has admitted some little amplifications, that tend to convey notions respecting the Ice-

landic mythology, which are not warranted by the original; such as, "*coal-black* steed, *raven* hair, *thrice* he traced the Runic rhyme, the portals *nine* of hell, foam and *human* gore." But in every other respect it is a most valuable translation, and the public cannot desire another, though it may require some illustration. Frigga, when she took the oaths of all nature, overlooked the misletoe; Loke, having observed this, maliciously persuaded Hoder to dart a branch of it at Balder, which proved fatal to him. Vali, or Ali, the son of Odin and Rinda, revenged his death by slaying Hoder; which wonderful feat he performed, when he was but one night old, Ein-nætt; as is stated in this ode, and in the 32d stanza of Volospá. It is not certain, what Odin means by the question concerning the weeping virgins; but it has been supposed, that it alludes to the embassy afterwards sent by Frigga to try to redeem Balder from the infernal regions, and that Odin betrays his divinity by mentioning what had not yet happened. The object

of this embassy was frustrated by the perfidy of Loke; who, having assumed (as was supposed) the shape of an old woman, refused to join in the general petition, by which failure the spell was rendered ineffectual: but the Gods, having with difficulty made Loke their prisoner, bound him with a strong chain, which he will not break till the end of the world, or (as the Icelanders call it) the twilight of the Gods. To this the prophetess alludes in the last stanza.

Gray's Fatal sisters is very inferior to his descent of Odin, and in some passages he has lost much of the strength and spirit of the original; as for instance in the ninth stanza,

Nu er ogurligt um at litaz,
 At dreyrugt sky dregr med himni;
 Mun lopt litad lyda blodi,
 Adr spar varar springa allar;

from which the following lines are translated, without the insertion or omission of a word.

'Tis horrid now to gaze around,
 While clouds thro' heaven gore-dropping sail;
 Air must be stain'd with blood of men,
 Ere all our oracles shall fail.

Gráy has translated it thus,

“ Horror covers all the heath;
 Clouds of carnage blot the Sun.”

I have added a close translation of a few lines from the descent of Odin in the Icelandic metre, which is regulated by a corresponding letter in the two halves of each verse, instead of rhyme. One vowel is allowed to correspond with another.

The dog he met from hell advancing;
 His adverse breast with blood was clotted,
 His jaws for combat keenly grinning,
 Fierce he bay'd the spell's dread father,
 Oped his huge throat, and howl'd long after. 30
 On rode Odin; the deep earth sounded;
 He reach'd the lofty house of Hela;
 Ugger rode to the Eastern portals,

There he knew was the tomb of Vala.

Strange verse he sung the slain enchanting, 35

Traced mystic letters northward looking,

&c. &c. &c.

However inharmonious to an English ear, they may serve to give a more distinct idea of Icelandic poetry, and to shew exactly in what degree Gray has varied from the original. Ugger is another name for Odin. He has many, which are used indiscriminately, as Tonans or Saturnius for Jupiter. In this metre two corresponding letters are sometimes required in the first half of the line, and one in the second, as v. 35. When there is but one in each, the second generally commences with it, as v. 26 and 28. Some of the Icelandic metres are much more difficult; as,

Fylli ec flock thin, stillir;

Fellr á hönd mer elli.

Evind in Heimskringla.

THE
DYING SONG
OF
ASBIORN
IN
ORMS STOROLFSONAR SAGA.

*From the old Icelandic printed in Bartholinus,
Ant. Dan. p. 158.*

1803.

Know, gentle mother, know,
Thou wilt not comb my flowing hair,
When summer sweets return,
In Denmark's vallies, Svanyhide fair!
O whilom had I fondly vow'd
To hie me to my native land!
Now must my panting side be torn
By my keen foe's relentless brand.

5

Not such those days of yore,
When blithe we quaff'd the foaming ale,
Or urged across the waves
From Hordaland the flying sail;

10

Or gladly drank the sparkling mead,
While social mirth beguiled the hour.

Now lonely in the narrow den 15
I mourn the giant's savage pow'r.

Not such those days of yore,
When forth we went in warlike show:
Storolf's all-glorious son,
Stood foremost on the armed prow; 20

As sailing fast to Oresound
The long-keel'd vessels cleft the wave.

Now toled into the fatal snare
I mourn beneath the sorcerer's cave.

Not such those days of yore, 25
When conquest mark'd proud Ormur's way,
Stirring the storm of war,
To glut the greedy beasts of prey.

Toled, led by deceit.

Beneath his thundering falchion's stroke
 Flow'd the deep waters red with gore, 30
 And many a gallant warrior fell
 To feed the wolves on Ifa's shore.

Not such those days of yore,
 When south on Elfa's rocky coast
 Warring with weapons keen 35
 I fiercely smote the adverse host.

Oft from the loudly sounding bow
 Ormur's unerring arrows flew;
 Deadly, whene'er his wrath pursued
 The bold sea-rover's trusty crew *. 40

Not such those days of yore,
 When, swift to meet the haughty foe,
 We roused the strife of swords,
 Nor e'er declined the hostile blow.

* After this line two stanzas are omitted, containing proper names.

Seldom did I the steel withhold, 45
 Or let to sting the warrior's side ;
 But ay did Ormur's ruthless arm
 Humble our foemen's sturdy pride.

O did thy generous soul
 Thy dying fere's last anguish know, 50
 Ormur, thine heart would rise,
 Thy warlike eyes with fury glow !
 Friendship, to venge my fatal wrongs,
 (If power remain) will point the way ;
 And soon beneath thy biting glaive 55
 My torturer rue this cruel day !

Let to sting, forbear from stinging. *Fere*, companion.

NOTES

ON

THE SONG OF ASBIÖRN.

ASBIÖRN the proud (or rather the accomplished, for that was the old signification of the word *pruði*) was descended from an illustrious family established in the provinces of Nordmøre and Hordaland in Norway. A few years before his death, which took place in 995, he united in fellowship of arms with Ormur Storolfson, a distinguished Icelandic warrior; and they carried on together a piratical warfare, till Ormur returned to his native country. A Jotun, or giant, called Bruse, dwelt in a cavern upon a small island on the coast of Norway, who, on account of his stature, strength, and skill in sorcery, was deemed invincible. The difficulty of the enterprise excited Asbiörn to attempt to slay him, for it was generally esteemed as laudable to destroy a Jotun, as a bear or other wild beast; and no feat

tended so much to exalt the reputation of a warrior. Asbiörn landed on the island, and proceeded alone at daybreak to the cavern, which was so dark, that Bruse, who suspected the object of his visit, sprung upon him unawares, and put him to a cruel and lingering death. Asbiörn did not utter a single groan; but, lamenting only, that he had not had an opportunity of measuring his strength with the giant, composed these stanzas, which he is said to have recited during his last moments. Singular as this may now appear, it was a common affectation amongst the warriors of the North, whose greatest pride was to display indifference at the hour of death, and to smile and jest in their last agonies. The most remarkable instances of their fortitude are collected in the fifth chapter of Bartholinus; but in this they certainly did not surpass the American Indians, who uttered their death-song with calm intrepidity in the midst of torments too horrid to relate, recounted the exploits of their youth, boasted of their own cruelties, and suggested even to their enemies

“ more exquisite methods of torture, and more sensible parts of the body to be afflicted *.”

Skill in poetry was an accomplishment almost indispensable to a northern warrior; and, although the rules of their metre were strict and various, they were habituated to speak in verse on every important incident; and the whole of their life was like a tragic opera.

“ Ferox bello, tamen inter arma,
Sive jactatam religârat udo
Litore navem,
Liberum, et Musas, Veneremque, et illi
Semper hærentem puerum canebat.”

The Jotuns (as I have before stated) were the people, who had settled in the north before the time of Odin. They were a race of large stature; and seldom built houses, but dwelt in the caves, which are numerous in those rocky countries, and were looked upon as sorcerers. Mengerda, the half sister of Bruse, repeated the dying song of Asbiörn to Ormur, whom she

* *Burke's Europ. Sett.* i. 119.

assisted in revenging his death. It is preserved in Orms Saga; and, whether really composed by Asbiörn or not, from its style is certainly not of much later date. It contains some words, with which I am unacquainted; and in those passages I have adhered to the interpretation of Bartholinus. In the *Kiæmpe viiser* is a Danish translation of this ode, which I have not seen. I have omitted two stanzas, which contain only an enumeration of the names of Asbiörn's companions.

V. 21. "*To Oresound.*" At Eyrarsundi. The straits between Denmark and Sweden, commonly called the Sound.

V. 23. "*Toled.*" Tældr, from the verb *tæla*, to *tole*, or lead on by deceit into a snare. It is derived from *tal*, deceit. Johnson in his dictionary has called this expressive word "a barbarous provincial term," though he has quoted the authority of Locke. It is singular, that he did not recollect, that it is used in one of the finest passages in Beaumont and Fletcher,

which Milton has imitated, but not surpassed in his
Comus.

“ Or voices calling me at dead of night,
To make me follow, and so tole me on
Thro’ mire and standing pools, to find my ruin.”

Faithf. Sheph. act 1st.

V. 32. “ *Ifa*.” Generally supposed to mean the
Veissel; but Mr. Johnstone, in his glossary to *Lod-
brokar quida*, says, that it is the river Iva in Anger-
mannia, a province of Sweden; but he does not state
his authority.

V. 35. “ *Elfa’s rocky coast*.” Part of the coast
of Bahus.

GUNLAUG AND RAFEN.

*From the Solarliod in Sæmund's Edda,
Stanza tenth, &c.*

1803.

THE rich delights of love
To many fatal prove ;
From women oft does sorrow spring :
Much evil do they bear,
Though fashion'd purely fair 5
And chaste by heaven's almighty King.

To Gunlaug fondly join'd
In peace was Rafen's mind ;
Each was the other's dearest joy :
Ere they, to fury moved, 10
One beauteous woman loved,
Whose peerless charms did both destroy.

Nor after heeded they
 Or sports or light of day,
 All for that blooming maiden bright; 5
 Nor any other form
 Their wilder'd thoughts could warm,
 Save that fair body's lovely light.

Mournful and sad to them
 Each night's dark shadow came, 20
 Nor ever found they slumbers sweet;
 But from their hapless fate
 Wax'd quickly savage hate
 Between true friends with deadly heat.

Passions of strange excess 25
 Beget severe distress,
 And punishment of keenest woe.
 The single fight they tried,
 For that delightful bride,
 And each received the fatal blow. 30

N O T E

ON

GUNLAUG AND RAFEN.

IN the Icelandic the fictitious names Svafader and Skarthedin are used instead of Gunlaug and Rafen, but the author certainly alluded to their celebrated history; and deservedly is it celebrated, since, in consequence of their fatal enmity, the legal duel was abolished, by the full public assembly of the Icelanders, in the year 1011, only eleven years after the first establishment of the Christian religion amongst them. The vanity of the natives of more temperate regions has induced them to imagine, that the ungenial climate of the northern countries had stunted the genius of their inhabitants, and arrested their progress towards civilization. But so far is this fact from being true, that at that early period, when the rest of Europe was involved

in darkness, their understandings seem to have been far more enlarged. Not many years before the custom of duelling was finally abolished in Iceland, the single combat was established by Otho the great in Germany, as the final decision, not only on the rights and character of individuals, but on the general principles of equity and jurisprudence. The important laws of inheritance were instituted by that powerful emperor, not according to the counsel of statesmen and legislators, the practice of ancient times, or the political interests of his dominions, but the uncertain event of a superstitious duel. Within half a century after this famous decree of the Icelandic assembly, Henry the fourth of Germany was prevented only by the accidental death of his accuser from exhibiting the extraordinary scene of an arbitrary prince descending from the imperial throne, and waving the privileges of allegiance, to defend his private character against the attacks of a rebellious subject. At the instigation of the same emperor, we find a duke of Bavaria branded with

infamy for refusing the challenge of an obscure and discredited calumniator, and deprived of his liberty and dominions by the unanimous suffrage of the Saxon princes. Nor was this effected by the servility of dependent flatterers to gratify the wish of Henry, but by the fixed decision of those high-minded princes, who not only resisted his encroachments, but drove him at length barefooted and defenceless, to receive his sentence at Canosa from the sullen despotism of Gregory the seventh. I have particularized these circumstances, for the purpose of marking, that, at the very time, when the enlightened Icelanders cast aside this superstitious and barbarous custom, in the rest of Europe it was in its meridian glory. To how late a period it has lasted, is known to all. I have subjoined a brief account of the history of Rafen and Gunlaug, which is one of the most entertaining old Icelandic works, and was printed in 4to. from the manuscripts at Copenhagen in 1775.

Gunlaug was the son of Illugi, a man of great

wealth and authority in Iceland. He was a youth of large and robust stature, and distinguished by his poetry, which was so satirical, that he acquired the name of Ormstunga, or Snake-tongue. In his earliest youth he was bold and restless; and at the age of fifteen, having quarrelled with his father, who would not permit him to travel, he fled to the house of Thorstein son of the famous Egill Skallagrimsson, who received him with kindness. Thorstein had a daughter called Hjelga the fair, who was esteemed the most beautiful woman in the island. A mutual and fatal attachment soon commenced between her and Gunlaug, and the wild disposition of his mind was considerably softened by her gentle conversation. The three following years were passed by Gunlaug partly at the abode of Thorstein, and partly at that of his father; at the expiration of which he again pressed Illugi to send him abroad. The request was now granted, and a share in a trading vessel was purchased for him. While Thorkell, who was to be the companion of his

voyage, was employed in loading the vessel, Gunlaug preferred the society of Helga, and returned to the house of Thorstein. He soon found an opportunity of asking for the hand of his daughter, which at first was refused on account of his fickle disposition; but Thorstein at length agreed, that the marriage should take place, if at the end of three years he returned to claim the promise. Soon after Gunlaug sailed from Iceland, and, having visited several other countries, he arrived at the court of king Olave at Upsala. There he met his countryman Rafen, a man of noble birth, and skilled in poetry; with whom he formed a close intimacy, which however was disturbed by a dispute about precedence in reciting their poems before the king. Rafen returned to Iceland; and at the expiration of the third year, Gunlaug being still absent, he solicited the hand of the fair Helga. Some difficulties were made by Thorstein, but he gave his consent at last to Rafen, in case Gunlaug should not return in the course of the next summer. A day was fixed for the nuptials:

Gunlaug, who had been severely hurt in wrestling, did not appear; and the melancholy Helga was forced to espouse her new suitor. On that very day Gunlaug arrived at the house of his father, and would have proceeded immediately to the abode of Thorstein, but his lameness rendered it impracticable. The sorrows of the lovely Helga were doubled by the faithful return of the fond companion of her childhood, and the society of her husband became hateful to her. Soon after Rafen was challenged by Gunlaug in the public assembly; for by the law of Iceland at that time, whoever had received an injury, might call out the offender to single combat. Rafen, as challenged, gave the first blow; his sword broke against the shield, but a splinter from it struck the face of Gunlaug. One being wounded, the other disarmed, each claimed the victory; but their relations interfered, and the next day, in a crowded assembly, it was decreed, that from that hour no duels should be fought in Iceland. Rafen afterwards challenged Gunlaug to meet him

again in Norway ; and, after some delay, they and their followers arrived severally at Thronthiem : but earl Eric, who had heard their history, forbade their fighting in his dominions. Gunlaug passed the winter at his court in the deepest melancholy ; but, galled at last by the satyrical reflections of some of the Norwegians, he asked leave to depart, and followed his antagonist towards the Swedish territory. By the side of a lake they met upon a spot called Dyngiunes ; and their companions, having protested, that they could not remain inactive, were permitted to join in the combat. The guides, who were less ambitious, seated themselves, and did not interfere. The conflict was bloody and expeditious ; Gunlaug and Rafen were soon the only survivors, and after a few blows Gunlaug cut off the foot of his enemy, who did not however fall, but supported himself by the stump of a tree. Gunlaug refused to continue the fight with a man, who was so maimed ; but Rafen replied, that, “ though he certainly was a little curtailed, if he could procure water

to drink, he should be still his match.”—“Do not then deceive me,” said Gunlaug, “if I bring thee water in my helmet.” Rafen answered, “That will I not.” Then went Gunlaug to the lake, and brought water in his helmet, and presented it to him. Rafen took it in his left hand, and at the same moment smote the naked head of Gunlaug with his sword. “Ill hast thou deceived me,” said Gunlaug, “and this was most unmanly, when I trusted thee.”—“It was so,” replied Rafen, “but I cannot bear, that thou shouldst enjoy the fair Helga.” The fight was then renewed, and Gunlaug slew him; but the wound in his head was mortal, and he expired after the third night. The beautiful Helga was afterwards married to a noble Icelfander called Thorkell; but she never loved him, and retained the sad recollection of her early attachment till the hour of death.

THE
COMBAT
OF
HIALMAR AND ODDUR,
WITH
ANGANTYR AND HIS ELEVEN BROTHERS.

*From the old Icelandic in the fifth chapter of
Hervarar Saga, Verel. edit.*

1803.

THEN went the sons of Angrym to Sams-ey; and, when they arrived there, they found the* champions-fury come upon them: they immediately landed, as was their custom, and fought with trees. Hialmar and Oddur lay on the other side of the island, in a place called Unnarvoge; they both landed, and mounted an eminence, to try if they could discover the sons of Angrym. When Angrym's sons had ascended the island, they saw Hialmar's ship, and recognised it. The champions-fury was then upon them, and at its

* See the notes.

utmost height; they drew their swords, and bit the edges of their shields, and grinned violently. Then went they against the ships, and commenced a great contest. Oddur and Hialmar had two ships well equipped, of that sort, which were called Asks. Six of the champions went against each ship, and they made the attack on one side before, and on the other behind. But on board were such good warriors, that they all defended their quarters, and fell there. The champions slew all the men, who were in the ships, and regained the shore. The fury then quitted them. It is said concerning champions, that when the fury first leaves them, they are weak, like sick men. Now Oddur and Hialmar saw, what the champions were doing, and they hastened down towards the ships with the greatest speed. Then Oddur sung thus :

“ Fiercely from the vessel come
 Champions twelve, a fearful sight;
 Thus unarm'd without their mails
 Bold to meet the deadly fight.”

Then sung Hialmar thus in answer :

“ From the ship with warlike stride , . . . 5
 (Sight, which might the bold appall)
 Haste to’ seize the hostile spoil
 Twelve together, champions tall.
 Warriors two at close of day
 We shall sup in Odin’s hall ; . . . 10
 And those twelve victorious live,
 Proudly live to boast our fall.”

Such words of despair had Hialmar never spoken in
 the hearing of man. Then Oddur sung thus :

“ To thy words of omen foul,
 Hero, I in answer say ;
 Champions twelve in Odin’s hall . . . 15
 They shall sup at close of day ;
 We shall both victorious live
 Home to wend in proud array.”

Now said Oddur ; “ One of two things have we to
 chuse ; to fly into the woods, or abide here with armed
 hands.” Then sung Hialmar :

“ From our foes in deadly fight

Never let us basely fly;

20

Though I weet, the champions bear

Hideous mien and savage eye.”

The champions now rushed towards them with drawn swords; they were all bloody, and one of them was a head taller, than the others. He had a sword, which shone forth like a sunbeam, and that was Angantyr with Tirsing. Then said Hialmar; “ Wilt thou rather join combat with Angantyr alone, or with those eleven?” Oddur answered; “ With Angantyr must I combat; for I trust better to my raiment, than to thine armour.” Oddur had got a silk garment from Ireland, which weapons could never pierce. Hialmar said; “ If thou esteemest it more to combat with Angantyr, then shall I do that; for where have we so acted, that thou shouldst go before me in the trial of manhood?” Then went Hialmar forward, and Angantyr against him; and they began their duel with mighty blows and violent collision; and no one could have be-

held a more vigorous onset, than was made by them.

Oddur called to the champions, and said :

“ One with 'one, if courage hold,

Wage we battle, warriors bold.”

They assented. Then went forth Hiorvardur, and fought with Oddur; but the silk raiment sufficed so well for defence, that the sword pierced it not. He had also so good a blade, that it clove armour, even as a garment; and few blows gave he to Hiorvardur, before he fell. Then went forth Hervardur, and departed the same way; next Hrani; then one after one; but Oddur shewed them such hardy opposition, that he felled all the eleven brothers, yet was he not wounded. Then went Oddur, where Angantyr and Hialmar had combated, and thus he sung :

“ Hialmar, what does thee betide; 25

Has thy color waxed pale?

Mighty wounds have wrought thee woe;

Sad I sing the mournful tale.

Furious blows have cleft thine helm,

On thy side have rent thy mail ; 39
Now thy life is nearly spent ;
Sad I sing the mournful tale."

Then sung Hjalmar in answer:

"Sixteen wounds my body bears,
 And my mail is rent in twain;
 Darkness hangs before my sight;
 Ill my limbs their weight sustain.
 Angantyr's enchanted blade
 Stings my heart with fatal pain;
 Keenly piercing is the point,
 Hard, and steep'd in deadly bane."

And then he sung thus:

“ Proud domains and palaces
 Five I ruled with puissant hand ;
 Yet I never could abide
 Peaceful in my native land.
 Hopeless now of light and life

45

Rest I on a foreign strand,
 Here on Samsey's joyless shore
 Wounded by the piercing brand.

Seated at the royal board
 Many lords of high degree 50
 In the court of Upsala
 Quaff the ale with mirth and glee;
 Many with the liquor fill'd
 On the ground lie heavily;
 Me the sword's keen wounds afflict 55
 Circled by the lonely sea.

Youthful beauty's fairest flow'r
 Me the monarch's daughter led
 To the shore of Agnafit,
 Soon a foreign coast to tread. 60
 True I find the fatal words,
 Which the parting damsel said;
 That I never should return
 Blithe to claim her promised bed.

Thence unwilling did I wend 65
Sever'd from the festive lay,
Which the lovely women sing
East of Sota's spacious bay.
In the swiftly sailing bark
O'er the waves I took my way; 70
Faithful friends the vessel trimm'd;
Here we sped with short delay.

From my finger draw the ring,
E'en in death my dearest pride ;
To the blooming Ingebiorg 75
Bear it o'er the billows wide.
In her bosom fair and young
Constant sorrow shall abide,
When she hears, I ne'er return
Blithe to claim my promised bride. 80

O'er the rugged desert wild
East the hungry raven flies ;

And behind on stronger wing
Swift the lordly eagle hies.
Soon to glut his hasty rage 85
Here my feeble body lies ;
He will gorge the welling blood,
As I close my dying eyes."

After this died Hialmar and Angantyr. All the brothers were buried there in the island with their weapons; but Oddur bore the dead Hialmar to Sig-tuna. Ingebiorg daughter of King Inga would not survive Hialmar, and destroyed herself.

NOTES

ON

THE COMBAT

OF

HIALMAR AND ODDUR

WITH

ANGANTYR AND HIS ELEVEN BROTHERS.

I HAVE followed the old edition of Verelius, containing a tolerably good Swedish version, which has assisted me in making out the most obscure passages; for the Icelandic poetry (which is almost a distinct language from the prose) in style, expression, and obscurity, bears some analogy to the chorusses of the Greek tragedians. I have since collated it with the manuscript in the British Museum, and the later edition, published with a Latin translation at Copenhagen, from various manuscripts, in which the text differs much from that given by Verelius; which, though certainly corrupt in some passages, I have preferred, be-

cause that of the manuscripts used in the Danish edition seems to have been interpolated for the sake of explanation by the transcribers. I have translated the prose very closely; the verse in one or two places is a little amplified, on account of the obscurity of the original, and the shortness of the lines.

P. 71. "*Sam's-ey*." Or Sams-isle, one of the Danish islands. "Samus Balthica, alias Samsoa; Pontano hist. Dan. pag. 305. Samsoa sive Samus Danica, Saxoni Grammatico, lib. 5. edit. Sorens, p. 93. Sampso, ibid. pag. 366 and 376. Samsa; Danicè Samss-œe; Island. Samsey; Sami insula, est insula amplissima, quæ in mari Balthico situm dilatat, orientali suo litore sinum Coda-num et partem Selandiæ insularum Danicarum maximæ, et occiduo Jutiam Borealem exporrigit." *Resenius Sams. ins. descrip. Hafn. 1675.* It was a prevailing custom amongst the warriors of the northern nations to fight their duels in the islands, which abound upon their coasts. The Icelandic word *holmgangr* for a duel appears to be derived from this practice. Holm signifies

an island. In *Gunl. Sag.* Gunlaug challenges Rafei by these words; “Nu fyrir that vil ek bida ther *holmgaunga* her a thinginu a thriggia natta fresti i *Auxarar-holmi.*” *i. e.* “Now for that will I challenge thee here in the public assembly to single combat at the expiration of three nights in Auxar island.”

Hialmar and Hiorvardur one of the sons of Angrim were competitors for the hand of Ingebjorg daughter of king Inga, who resided at Upsala. The princess was attached to Hialmar, but her father, dreading the violence of Angantyr and his brothers, promised her to the strongest; and Hialmar was challenged by Hiorvardur to fight in Sams island. The famous Orvar Oddur was the friend and companion in arms of Hialmar.

P. 71. “*Champions fury.*” Berserksgangr. I have ventured to translate Berserker by the English word champions; but there is no term in any language, that can exactly answer to it. These extraordinary people have been called by Latin writers berserki. See

Kristnisaga, p. 142. They fought without armour, and were subject to a sort of fury, which was called Berserksgangr. Their name is derived from *ber*, bare, and *serkr*, a garment or coat of mail. The following account of them is given by Snorre Sturleson. “*Enn hanns menn foro bryniлаuser, &c. i. e.*” And his (Odin’s) men went without coat of mail, and were furious like dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and were strong as bears or bulls; they slaughtered mankind, and neither fire nor steel had power over them. That is called Berserks gaugur.” *Yngl. Sag. c. 6.* Verelius calls them, “*Viri facinorosi, robusti, et bonorum paci graves, quibus iratis vel furore percitis ita intendebantur vires in luctam, pugnas, et cædes, ut postea debiles et languidi fierent.*” In his *Lexicon Scandicum* he explains the word berserkr, “*Homines robore et animi ferociâ aliis omnibus terribiles, qui furore et rabie armati obvia quæque prosternebant, evulsasque radicibus arbores in adversarios suos torquebant. Furore autem isto exhausti cæteris debiliores existebant.*” It

will be sufficient to quote an account of one of these furious champions from Saxo Grammaticus. “ *Eà tempestate Harthbenus quidam ab Helsingiâ veniens, raptas regum filias stupro sædare gloriæ loco ducebat; illum perimere solitus, a quo peragenda veneris usu prohiberetur; illustres nuptias humilibus præferens, tantoque se clariorem existimans, quanto splendidiore concubitus per vim assequi potuisset. Nec ultionem effugit, qui se ei comparatione virtutis æquare præsumeret. Tantâ verò corporis magnitudine erat, ut novem cubitis proceritatis ejus dimensio tenderetur. Huic duodecim athletæ contubernales fuere, quibus officio erat, quoties illi præsaga pugnæ rabies incessisset, vinculorum remedio oborti furoris impetum propulsare. Ab his Haldanus Harthbenum ejusque pugiles viritim impetere jussus non solùm certamen spondit, sed etiam victoriam sibi ingenti verborum fiduciâ promisit. Quo audito Harthbenus, repentino furiarum afflatu correptus, summas clypei partes morsûs acerbitate consumpsit, igneos ventri carbones mandare non destitit,*

raptas ore prunas in viscerum ima transfudit, crepitantia flammæ pericula percurrit; ad postremum, omni sævitæ genere debacchatus, in sex athletarum suorum præcordia furenti manu ferrum convertit. Quam insaniam illi pugnandi aviditas an naturæ ferocitas attulit, incertum est. Haldanum deinde residuâ pugilum manu petivit." *Saxo, lib. 7.* This troublesome race was so plentiful in the North before the establishment of the Christian religion, that circumstances of the same nature are related in almost every old Icelandic work; and it is stated in *Grettis saga*, c. 21, that earl Eric banished all such men from his dominions in Norway, "giordi alla berserki utlæga ur Noregi." It appears, that, however desirous, they had not the power of resisting the paroxysm of rage; for, in a passage quoted by Bartholinus from *Vatnzdala saga*, Thorer laments, that he is subject to it, and asks the advice and assistance of his brother to prevent it. By the heathens they were supposed to be under the influence of witchcraft, and the first Christians in the

North thought them possessed by devils. It is related in *Eyrbyggja saga*, that Thrander was subject to the fury, whilst he was a heathen, but that it quitted him (as generally was the case) after he had been baptized. These accounts are singular, and indeed we meet with nothing similar to this extraordinary phrenzy in the history of any other people, unless it be the Malays; but there cannot be the least doubt of their authenticity. The various histories agree in stating, that, during the access of rage, the force of these champions was irresistible, and almost supernatural; but that afterwards they were sick and weak, like men exhausted by violent illness. See *Egills saga*, and *Eyrb. sag.* Many of them are described, as mild and affable in their general demeanor, unless suddenly thwarted or contradicted. It appears to me, that this temporary madness was merely the violent eruption of a savage disposition, amongst men undisciplined and untamed; whose limbs had been invigorated by the practice of every corporeal exertion; who from their habits of life and their reli-

gion were entirely devoid of fear, from earliest youth had been accustomed to constant warfare and pillage, and had known no controul, but their own will, no bound to their desires, but the impossibility of gratifying them. If I may apply to this subject the sublime poetry of Guidi,

“ Ardea su l' alma a i chiari duci——

Sdegno regale, e bellicoso ardire,

E quel fatal desire

Di sempre incatenar regni ed eroi ;

E così i figli suoi

Vide ————— la stirpe altera

Tanto infiammarsi alla stagion guerriera.”

The following singular story is related of Eric king of Denmark, in which it appears, that he was seized with a fury not unlike that of the Berserki; in consequence of which he vowed to undertake an expedition to the holy land, and died at Cyprus, according to Holberg in 1105. “ One day, when he was sitting at table and carousing with his friends, a musician was announced, who boasted, that he could

sway the passions of all men, as he chose, by the sound of his harp. The king ordered him to enter, and make the experiment; but the musician excused himself for a long time, saying, that it would cause the king to lose his reason. This refusal served only to awaken their curiosity still more, so that he was compelled to play by fear of punishment. When the musician found, that the king was positive in his commands, he first requested, that the king's servants would shut up all the arms and weapons, which were in the hall. When this was done, and the doors locked, he began to strike the harp. The first piece, he played, had this effect, that the whole court became very sorrowful and melancholy; the second roused them all to mirth, so that they sprung up and danced; but at the third they all became furious. In this moment of rage the king broke open a closet, and seized a sword, with which he slew four of his ministers; and his attendants were forced to throw themselves upon him, and hold him forcibly, till the fury had sub-

sided." See *Holbergs Dannemarks Riges Historie*, 1. 198. This circumstance is told more at length by Saxo Grammaticus, *lib.* 12.

P. 73. "*Odin's hall.*" The slain in battle were supposed to go to the residence of Odin, which was called Val-hall, the hall of the slain. Odin was frequently called Valfodur, the father of the slain. To go to the hall of Odin is a common expression for to die in battle, as in the song of Evind Skaldaspiller called Hako-narmal, "Hver Yngva ættar Skyldi meth Othni fara I Valhöll at vera." *i. e.* "Which of the descendants of Yngua should go to abide with Odin in Valhalla." Those, who were about to fall in battle, were invited to Valhalla either by Odin himself, or by the Valkyriæ, the virgins of slaughter, who were deputed for that purpose. For a fuller account of this see Bartholinus's excellent book *De Causis contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis*, L. 2. c. 11. Snorro in his Edda says, that "Odin is called Alfodur, because he is father of all the Gods; he is also called Valfodur,

because his chosen sons are those, who fall in the slaughter of battle. To them he assigns Valhalla." *Gör. Edd. p. 36.*

P. 74. "*Tirfing.*" The sword of Angantyr. I have here subjoined a translation of the second and third chapters of *Hervarar Saga*, which contain the history of this sword.—“ At this time came from the east men of Asia and Turks, and settled in the north. Odin their leader had many sons, and they were all great men and powerful. One of his sons was called Sigurlami. To him Odin gave Gardarike (a part of Russia), and he was ruler over it. He espoused Hcidi the daughter of Gylfa; they had a son, who was called Svafurlami. Sigurlami fell in battle, when he fought with the Jotun Thiassa. Now, when Svafurlami heard the fall of his father, he undertook to govern all that empire, which his father had possessed, and was very powerful. It happened one day, that Svafurlami rode out to the chase, and sought long for a hart, but came not within reach of one the whole day, before the sun

was set. He had then rode so far in the forest, that he knew not where his home was. A hill was on his right hand; there he saw two dwarfs. He drew his sword against them, and chased them out from the stones. They prayed to ransom their lives, and he asked their names; and one was named Dyren, and the other Dualin. He knew, that they were the most skilful artificers amongst the dwarfs, and he bound them to this, that they should make him the best sword, they could. They were to make the hilt and the handle also of gold; the sheath and fastening of the belt of gold. He stipulated, that the sword should never miss its stroke, and never suffer from rust; that it should cleave iron and stones even as a garment, and give victory in battle and single combat to whoever bore it. This was the ransom of their lives. On the appointed day they came; the dwarfs gave him the sword; and, as Dualin stood at the entrance, he said; "Thy sword shall be the bane of man, whenever it is drawn; and with it shall be performed three most atro-

cious deeds; it shall also be thy bane." Svafurlami struck at the dwarfs with the sword, and the blade clove the stones. Svafurlami possessed this sword, and called it Tirfing; he bore it in battle and in single combat. He felled the giant Thiassa in single combat, and took his daughter, who was called Frydur. They had a child, whose name was Eyvor, a maiden beautiful and wise.

Now be it told, that the champion Angrym was upon an expedition of pillage, and led out with him many soldiers. He layed waste the kingdom of Svafurlami, and fought with him, and they contended with alternate blows. Svafurlami struck a part of the shield of Angrym, and the sword was wedged in by the blow. Then Angrym brandished his sword at the hand of Svafurlami, and cut it off. Angrym then seized Tirfing, and with it struck and felled Svafurlami. He afterwards took considerable booty and his daughter Eyvor. They had twelve sons. 1. Angantyr was the eldest. 2. Hervardr. 3. Hiorvardr. 4. Se-

mingr. 5. Hrani. 6. Brani. 7. Barri. 8. Reitner. 9. Tiundur. 10. Bui. 11. two Haddingers. Both these performed only one man's work; Angantyr was equal to two; he was a head taller, than any of them. They were all mighty champions, and superior to others in strength and valor. They went wide about the country to plunder, and were all victorious and far renowned. Angantyr possessed Tirsing, Semingr Misteltein, and Hiorvardr Hrotta; each of them had a capital sword for single combat. It was their custom, when they were alone with their men, if they found the fury (*berserksgangr*) come on, to go up into the country, and fight with stones or trees. It has happened to them unintentionally to slay their own men, and destroy their ship. So tidings went abroad concerning them." See *Hervarar Saga*, *Verel.* p. 37, &c.

The death of Hjalmar is placed by Suhm in the year 410. The real name of the Odin here mentioned was Hugleik; he flourished at the end of the third and be-

ginning of the fourth century, and was called Angul, because he established his dominion over the Anglo-Saxons in south Jutland; where he also acquired the name of Odin, whose religion he introduced amongst them. It was a common superstition amongst the northern nations to imagine, that the souls of their most eminent leaders revisited the earth and animated new bodies, and from this notion he has been confounded by the authors of *Hervarar saga*, *Vegtam's quida*, and other works, with the older Odin, from whom he was descended. He subdued the greater part of Jutland, and contended even with Frode the third for the crown of Denmark; but he found a powerful enemy in Hoder, by whom his son Balder was killed after a long contest. After this misfortune his influence was much diminished, and he retired with his adherents into Russia, where he espoused Rinda, and acquired considerable power.

P. 77. "*Afflict*." In the Swedish edition it is *thessari*; but the right reading is *thia*, from *ek thiac*, I afflict.

P. 77. "*Agnaft*." The spot, where Stockholm now

stands. "Agnafit, lingula terræ ad Mælerum lacum Sueciæ, quam Olaus sanctus freto Kongsund hodie dicto perfodiebat." *M.S. Lex. in the British Museum.*

Saint Olave, who reigned over Norway in the eleventh century, sailed with his fleet through Stocksund, and plundered the coast of the Swedish lake without opposition; but on his return he found the narrow passage completely blocked up by his enemies. In this dilemma he resolved to cut his way during the night through the narrow neck of land, called Agnafit: the waters of the lake, which were swollen by rain, assisted him in opening a channel, through which he made his escape; and on the next morning the Swedes, who had thought themselves certain of their prey, had the mortification of seeing the Norwegian fleet in the Baltic. See *Mallings St. og G. Handl. p. 282.*

P. 78. "*Sota.*" Part of the Swedish coast so called from Sote a famous pirate, who was defeated there by king Olaus.

P. 78. "*Faithful friends, &c.*" The reading in the

Swedish edition is corrupt. “Mesta sinni með holvinum.” That given in the Copenhagen edition is probably right; “Hinsta sinni með holvinum,” *i. e.* for the last time with true friends. There is a similar expression in the lamentation of Starkader; “Adr færi ek Hinsta sinni til Haurdaland,” *i. e.* “Before I went for the last time to Hordaland;” and in Holmveria saga,

“Thu hefir hingat i seinsta sinni

Feigum fotum folld sporada.”

i. e. For the last time hast thou here

Trod the ground with fated feet.

In the M.S. of Hervarar saga in the British Museum the line stands thus, Fyrsta sinni fra holvinum, *i. e.* for the first time from my true friends.

P. 79. “*Sigtuna*.” This was the spot, where Odin first established himself in Sweden and built a temple, on the side of the great lake Mæleren. “Sigtun betyder Siges bolig, &c.” *i. e.* “Sigtun signifies the abode or place of Sige; from which it may be readily conclud-

ed, that Odin's right name was Sigge, which is given to him in the Edda amongst many others." *Suhms Hist. af Dan.* 1. 35.

P. 79. "*Destroyed herself.*" The particulars of the death of Ingebiorg are related in the 31st chapter of Orvar Odds saga, where it is stated, that, when Oddur arrived with the body of Hialmar, and presented the ring to her, she was working a garment for Hialmar. The news of his death shocked her so violently, that she fell back, and instantly expired. Oddur raised her up and smiled, saying, that he rejoiced, that those were coupled in death, who were prevented from uniting in life. They were buried in one tomb at Upsala.

THE
SIXTEENTH CHAPTER
OF
SÖGU THATTUR AF ALFE KONGE
OG RECKUM HANNS,
CONTAINING
THE SONG OF HROKE THE BLACK.

From the old Icelandic in Biörner's Nordiska Kämpa datter.

1803.

HROKE the black was at the court of king Haco; Brynhilda was Haco's daughter. King Swein the victorious had been a suitor to Brynhilda, but rejected by Haco. Swein made a vow to destroy the man, who should marry Brynhilda, and her father also. Vifill, the son of Hiedin one of king Haco's earls, asked for the hand of Brynhilda, and it was promised to him on condition, that he should defend the realm against Swein. Hroke the black was unknown, and therefore he was received without honor, and seated

amongst the strangers. It happened one day, when the court was employed in the chase, and the women gathering nuts, that Brynhilda beheld a man of large stature standing against an oak tree, and heard him sing thus :

“ By Hamund’s son now be it told,
That two we were in battle hold;
Greater was our father’s fame,
Mightier, than thy Haco’s name.
Let Vifill be to none preferr’d,
Of those, who wait on Hamund’s herd !
Never swine-herd saw I there
Mean of soul, as Hiedin’s heir.
Happier was my active fate,
When I follow’d Alfur great.
In war united did we stand,
And haried each surrounding land.
Dauntless warriors then we led,
Where glory crowns the valiant head ;

Haried, pillaged. Icel. *heriade*, from *her*, an army.

In polish'd helmets did we shine, 15

Roaming through mighty regions nine.

In either hand without his shield

The sword I've seen the monarch wield;

Nor warrior lived, or near, or wide,

With stouter heart and nobler pride. 20

Yet some have said, who little wiss'd,

Haleyga's lord all reason miss'd.

I never saw the valiant king

Lack, what prudent counsels bring.

He bade his warriors never quail, 25

Nor in pain of death bewail;

None beneath his banners wait,

Save who embraced their leader's fate;

None groan upon the battle's ground,

Though pierced and gall'd by many a wound; 30

Nor pause to bind the sores, that burn,

Before the morning sun's return;

None afflict the captive foe,

Nor work the matron's shame and woe;

Maidens chaste their honor hold, 35
 Ransom'd by their parents' gold.
 Never bark, though stoutly mann'd,
 Garr'd us fly the hostile band;
 Small our force, but firm and good,
 One against eleven stood. 40
 Where'er we moved in arm'd array,
 To conquest still he led the way;
 No chief so swift to wield the sword,
 Save Sigurd famed at Giuka's board.
 Warriors many, good and proud, 45
 Did to the monarch's vessel crowd;
 Bork, and Bryniulf's hardy might;
 Bolverk, Haco fierce in fight;
 Eigill was there, and Erling young,
 Wighty sons of Aslac strong. 50
 Foremost of the martial crew
 Alf and my brother Hroke I knew;
 Styr and Steinar did I ken,
 Sons of Gunlad, warlike men.

Garr'd, made. Wighty, stout, active.

Hring and Halfdan bravely stood, 55
 Right-judging Danes, and Dag the proud;
 Stare, and Steingrim, Stafe, and Gaut;
 Doughtier would be vainly sought.
 Vale, and Hauk, sea-rovers bold,
 Did to our monarch firmly hold. 60
 Champions more sturdy, than the twain,
 Few live in Haco's wide domain.
 Nor I amid that warlike race
 Did e'er my father's arm disgrace;
 They said, none earn'd a higher name, 65
 For each upheld his comrade's fame.
 Woe worth Vemund, who did slay
 Bersé and Blorn upon a day,
 Before the king, who boldly train'd
 His dauntless troops, while life remain'd. 70
 That precious life was not preserv'd,
 Long, as fearless deeds deserv'd;
 Scarce twelve years old he first gan fight,
 Just thirty on the fatal night.

'Tis this, which gars me little sleep, 75
 And watchful bids me nightly weep;
 Still mindful of my brother's fate,
 Burnt alive with Alfur great.
 Of all the hours, that mortals know,
 This caused me heaviest deepest woe; 80
 Taught since then by angry Heav'n
 To follow friendly counsel giv'n.
 Vengeance for my fallen king,
 Alone can joy and comfort bring;
 If I through Asmund's recreant heart 85
 Might drive the sword, or piercing dart.
 Vengeance for Alfur brave be ta'en,
 Deceived in peace, and foully slain!
 Murder was wrought in evil hour
 By treacherous Asmund's baneful pow'r. 90
 Mine the task in arms to prove,
 When Swein and I to battle move,
 Which is most in combat brave,
 Hamund's son, or Haco's slave.

Gar, Icel. *giöra*, or *gera*; Swed. *göra*; Dan. *giöre*; Cornish, *gurey*: *facere*.

Thus have I sung to maiden fair ; 95
 Thus to Brynhilda love declare :
 If Hroke, great Hamund's son, might know,
 That she to him would favor shew.
 Hope should I have, if we were join'd,
 Warriors wise and bold to find ; 100
 For maid more peerless, well I ween,
 Than Haco's daughter, ne'er was seen ;
 With every charm and virtue fraught,
 That e'er my youthful wishes sought.
 Now seem I here unknown to stand 105
 A nameless wight in Haco's land ;
 Higher rank his vassals hold,
 Than the kemps of Alfur bold."

Kemps, warriors.

N O T E S

ON

THE SONG OF HROKE THE BLACK.

SUM in his Hist. af Danm. bears testimony to the merit and antiquity of the song of Hroke the black. "This song, which is found in Alfs saga, is very excellent: and, as it is quite simple and historical, I am of opinion, that it is very old; perhaps even composed by Hroke himself." v. 1. p. 409. King Alf or Alfur was killed in 585. Hroke afterwards married Brynhilda, overthrew and killed Swein the victorious, and in company with Utstein revenged the death of Alf, by slaying Asmund in battle. Haco was king of Scania, and Swein the victorious ruled over the Danish island Fyen.

V. 22. "*Haleyga*." Haleyga, Helgeland, or Halogaland, so called from the old king Haloge, was the

north-western coast of Norway, including all Norland. Trondhiem and Nummedal were sometimes comprehended under the name. Alf was not properly king of Helgeland, but of Rogaland and Hordaland, in the neighbourhood of what is now Hardanger; but he invaded Helgeland, and probably conquered a part of it. See *Schön. Norsk. Hist.* 1. 315. and 333. Hiorleif the father of Alf was king of Hordaland and Rogaland, and conquered Seeland from king Reidar. See *Alfs Saga*, c. 5. and 8.

V. 44. "*Sigurd.*" Sigurd Sigmundsson, surnamed Fafnisbana. He married the daughter of Giuka, (a Saxon prince, whose dominions were situated on the southern bank of the Rhine,) and defended his territory against Sigurd Hring king of Denmark. See *Norna Gesters saga*, c. 6. *Torfæus Ser. R. D.* 337. *Volunga saga*, c. 33. and the unpublished historical odes in *Sæmund's Edda*.

V. 52. Hroke the white.

V. 67. "*Vemund.*" He was the standard-bearer

of king Alf. See *Alfs Saga*, c. 10. I believe, the circumstances of the death of Bersé and Biorn are not known; they were two of Alf's warriors.

V. 78. "*Burnt alive.*" By Asmund, who treacherously invited them to a feast, and having set fire to the house, attacked those, who attempted to escape.

V. 82. "*Friendly counsel.*" This probably alludes to the advice of Innstein, who had warned them of the snare, but was disregarded. He was killed, as well as Hroke the white, by the side of king Alf. The following lines are translated from his dying song in the 13th chapter of *Alfs saga*.

Hroke is slain by Alfur's side,
 Swift of foot, the army's pride.
 Ill hath Odin's power decreed,
 Which bade so good a monarch bleed.
 Eighteen years to dye the sword
 Follow'd I that generous lord;
 Other king I ne'er will have,
 Nor live to seek a peaceful grave.

To earth shall Innstein's faithful head
 Bow, where his valiant monarch bled. . . 10
 This let men in story tell,
 That good king Alfur smiling fell.

Alfs Saga contains many other stanzas in the same simple style, and of equal antiquity.

V. 94. "*Haco's slave.*" Vifill, who had promised to defend the kingdom against Swein.

A. D. 963.

1803.

The army's lord had warn'd the isles ;
The bane of earls, stout Denmark's dread, 10
With gallant suite of northmen bold
High rear'd his eagle-crested head.

The king of men (before he hied
 To stir the war with fearless might)
 To ground his iron mail had cast, 15
 The cumbrous harness of the fight.

He sported with his noble train,
 When roused to guard his native land;
 Joyful beneath the golden helm
 Now did the dauntless monarch stand. 20

His glittering brand the hauberks clove,
 As if it fell on liquid waves;
 The falchions clash'd; the bucklers broke;
 The armour sung beneath the glaives*.

Keen burn'd the swords in bleeding wounds;
 Long axes bow'd the struggling host; 30
 Loud echoing rang the bossy shields;
 Fast rain'd the darts on Storda's coast.

* The seventh stanza is omitted; see the notes.

Behind the buckler warriors bled ;
 In fight they joy'd from thirst of gold :
 Hot flow'd the blood in Odin's storm ; 35
 The stream of blades whelm'd soldiers bold.

With helmets cleft, and actons pierced,
 The arm'd chiefs rested on the plain ;
 Ah ! little thought that valiant host
 To reach the palace of the slain, 40

Couching her lance quoth Gondul fair ;
 " The crew of heaven be now encreas'd ;
 Stout Hacon with his countless host
 Is bidden hence to Odin's feast."

The monarch heard the fatal words, 45
 The steel-clad maids of slaughter bore ;
 All thoughtful on their steeds they sate,
 And held their glittering shields before.

"Why thus" (he said) "the war divide?
 From Heaven we merit victory!" 50
 "Thy force" (quoth Skogul) "we upheld,
 We bade thy mighty foemen fly.

Fair sisters," (cried the virgin bright)
 Ride we to heaven's immortal domes!
 Hear, Odin! Lo, to grace thy court 55
 The king of men, the victor, comes."

"Haste, Braga, and Hermoder, haste!
 To meet the chief" (quoth Odin) "go!
 Hither he wends, whose sturdy arm
 Has wrought full many a champion woe." 60

From war return'd, the battle won,
 His limbs shed fast a gory stream;
 "Odin," (he cried) "fierce Lord of death,
 Thy fell decrees full savage seem!"

" The peace of heroes shalt thou have ; 65
 Quaff with the Gods the sparkling beer !
 Proud bane of earls," (great Braga said)
 " Eight valiant brothers hast thou here."

" Our arms" (the generous king replied)
 " These warworn hands shall never yield : 70
 Helmet and mail be well preserv'd ;
 'Tis good the trusty blade to wield."

Then was it known, that Hacon's hand
 Due offerings to each Power had giv'n ;
 Who to their blissful seats was hail'd 75
 By all the glorious host of heav'n.

Hallow'd the day, and famed the year,
 That bore a king so largely loved !
 His memory be for ever saved,
 And bless'd the land, on which he moved ! 80

Fenris the wolf from Hell unchain'd
On mortals shall his fury pour,
Ere monarch great and good, as he,
Visit this desolated shore.

Wealth perishes, and kindred die;
Desert grows every hill and dale:
With heathen Gods let Hacon sit,
And melancholy swains bewail!

NOTES

ON

THE DEATH OF HACON.

THIS ode, which is called *Haconarmal*, was written immediately after the death of king *Hacon*, in 963, by his bard *Eivind Skaldaspiller*, and is deservedly esteemed one of the most beautiful relicks of Northern poetry; for there is an inimitable harmony in the original lines. It is preserved entire in *Heimskringla*. An English prose translation from the Latin version of *Peringskiöld* has been published by Dr. Percy in his Runic poetry, which is not quite so inaccurate, as the rest of that book: his translation of *Regner Lodbroc's* ode teems with*

* The geographical errors are particularly singular. "*Processimus ad terram prostratorum*," (*i. e.* the field of slaughter,) is there translated, "We marched to the land of Vals;" and, "In *Skioldungorum prælio*," "At *Skioldunga*." The *Skioldungi* were in fact the descendants of *Skiold*, king of Denmark.

errors, and indeed scarce a line of it is properly interpreted. Mr. Johnstone has had the merit of publishing the original text of that ode more accurately, than Worm or Biörner, with an English and Latin prose version, in which he has rectified many of Dr. Percy's errors, though his style is very indifferent: for instance, the last line, "Lægiandi skall eg deyia," (which is simply, *smiling shall I die*) he has translated, "The smiles of death compose my placid countenance;" and, "Vultu subridens moriar." There is however a celebrated passage in Regner's ode, which has been completely misunderstood by all its translators.

"Varat um eina ottu
 Olldum tharf at flya
 Híldar-leik, thar er hvassir
 Híalm-tun bitu skíolmar,
 Varat sem unga ekkiu
 Í öndveigt kyssa."

"Erat circa matutinum tempus
 Hominiбус necessum erat fugere
 Ex prælio, ubi acutè

Cassidis campos mordebant gladii.

Erat hoc veluti juvenem viduam

In primariâ sede osculari." *Worm, Literatura* Runica.*

And in another stanza,

"Varat sem biarta brude

I bing hia sier leggja."

"Erat sicut splendidam virginem

In lecto juxta se collocare." *Ib.*

"It was about the time of the morning, when the foe was compelled to fly in the battle. There the sword sharply bit the polished helmets. The pleasure of that day, was like kissing a young widow at the highest seat of the table." *Percy's Runic poetry.*

"The pleasure of that day was like having a fair virgin placed beside one in the bed." *Ib.*—"The sight was pleasing to my heart, as when my blooming bride I seated by me in the chair of state." *Johnstone.*

What notion the learned translators entertained of kissing young widows, I cannot pretend to say; but it is singular, that they should have imagined, Regner

* This is an inaccurate title; *Runer*, from which is formed the adjective *runic*, is simply the Icelandic word for letters, literature, or charms wrought by means of letters.

Lodbroc could have thought it like breaking heads with a broadsword. The fact is, that the lines mean the very reverse. *At*, added to an Icelandic verb, has the force of a negative, and is frequently used. *Var* means was; *varat*, was not. *Otta* is the earliest morning, when the cock crows, before sunrise; or more accurately, three hours after midnight. See *Torfwæ Vinlandia*, and *Jenssön's Norske Gloscebog*. The lines ought to have been thus rendered. "It was not early in the morning, when men were compelled to fly from the sport of battle, where sharp swords bit the surface of the helmets. This was not like kissing a young widow in the highest seat." By which he meant, that they had a long and hard contest, and that the sport of war was very different from the pleasures of peace. The other lines contain the same negative. There is a passage in *Fridthiofes* saga, which will illustrate these. *Fridthiofe*, who carried on a secret amour with the sister of his enemy *Baldur*, being forced to fly, is overtaken at sea by a violent tempest;

and, after describing the force of the waves and the miseries of a seafaring life, he adds,

“ Er ei sem biarta brudi
I Balldurs haga kyssum ;”

i. e. It is not like kissing the fair maid in the abode of Baldur :—and shortly after his companion says,

“ Erat sem eckia	Sollt ero augu
A thig villie drecka,	Syckut i laugu,
Biort baugvara	Bilsterka arma
Bidie nær fara ;	Bytur mer i hvarma.”

“ Non est, ut si vidua tibi vellet propinare, vel splendidus comitatus nuptialis te socium invitaret ; madet mihi oculus salsâ et tepidâ aquâ ; exercitium brachiorum fortium palpebras dolere facit.” *Biörner in Frid*, sag. p. 17

V. 1. “ *Gondul and Skogul.*” Two of the Val-kyriæ or virgins of slaughter, whom Odin dispatches from Valhalla to invite the principal warriors, who are about to fall in battle. See the notes on the combat of Ilialmar, &c. p. 89. The invitation from Odin was only sent to the most distinguished chieftains, and at other times (as is stated in the Fatal sisters) “ the Val-

kyriæ possess the option of slaughter, Eiga Valkyriur vals um kosti." *st.* 6.

V. 5. "*Unmail'd.*" Or bryniu. It was not unusual for the leaders to fight without coat of mail or shield, for the purpose of shewing their contempt of danger, and enjoying the free use of their limbs. But there is another reading, *i bryniu*, in his coat of mail; which is confirmed by the line, "Hialm og brynio skal hirda vel, Helmet and mail be well preserved."

V. 9. "*Isles.*" In Schöning's edition it stands, "Het a Holmrygi, sa er her kallar;" *i. e.* He, that summons the army, had warned the inhabitants of the islands belonging to the province of Rogaland. In Peringskiöld's, "Het a Haleggi, sem a Holmrygi;" *i. e.* He warned the inhabitants of Halogaland, as well as the islands, &c.

V. 12. "*Eagle-crested.*" Und ar hialmi. The word *ar* has various significations. Schöning has translated it *maturè*. In that sense it is the root of the English word *early*. Peringskiöld translates it

equilino signo notabili, from *are**, an eagle. *Ar* (with which the Latin word *ara* is probably connected) signifies also fire, (see *Gudm. Andreas*,) and I am inclined to think *Ar hialmi* means here a glittering helmet. A subsequent line says, that he stood “Und gull hialmi,” under a golden helmet.

V. 24. I have omitted a whole stanza after this line, because it is superfluous; and the two first lines, if not corrupt, are so obscure, that they have never been properly interpreted.

Trauddoz taurgur fyrir tys og banga

Hialta hardfotom hausi Nordmanna;

Roma vard i eyio; rudo kongar

Skirar skialdborgir i skatna blodi. *Per. edit.* i. 164.

The two last lines are very plain. “The conflict was in the island; the princes stained the bright edges of

* From *are* I believe our word *eyrie* is derived; Johnson derives it from *ey*, an egg; properly *ei*, German: but I do not believe, there is a word in the English language (unless very modern) of German origin, and the Germans have no word to express *eyrie*, which in French is spelt *aire*. In Anglo Sax. *æg* is an egg; in Icel. *egg*; in Galic *ubb*, or *ugb*. *Ey* is an island in Icel. The words, which we have in common with the Germans, are not borrowed from them, but drawn from a higher source.

the shields in the blood of nobles." But the two first have been variously explained. "Tyri (*i. e.* Martis) et Bogonis arma conculcabantur præ duris tegumentis induto Norvægorum cranio." *Peringskiöld*. "Concussa sunt scuta, viri regis, et duro gladii mucrone, crania Nordmannorum." *Schöning*, who reads hauser, instead of hausi. Dr. Percy, who followed *Peringskiöld*, asserts, that Bauga was a subordinate god of war; but no such person is mentioned in either Edda, and I can find no account of him. I believe, that *Peringskiöld*, who was puzzled by the word, got rid of the difficulty by translating it Bogonis, and that Bogo was deified by the learned bishop. The words cannot bear the construction or meaning given to them by *Schöning*. It does not appear, whether he takes hialta to be the gen. plur. of hialt, the hilt of a sword, or the gen. sing. of hialte, a hero; but it seems to have served him for both. If I may venture to propose a new interpretation, I should arrange the words thus. "Taurgur tys og bauga trauddoz fyrir hialta hardfotom hausi Nordmanna. Scuta Tyri (*i. e.* bellica) et

annulorum (*i. e.* rotunda, vel annulis munita) concubantur ante virum duripedem caput (*i. e.* ducem) Nordmannorum." 'Tyr was the God of war. Baugr, a ring, signifies in poetry any thing circular; and is sometimes used to express a shield, either on account of its form, or of the rings, by which it was attached to the arm. See *Nials saga*, and *Edda Sæm.* p. 306. I should therefore prefer reading the nom. plur. baugar, in which case the interpretation would be, Scuta bellica et clypei; but at any rate shields of rings, for shields adorned with or in the shape of rings, is a usual form of expression in Icelandic. The introduction of words between the preposition and its substantive is not unfrequent, nor does it here produce any confusion, as fyrir never governs a genitive case.

V. 32. "*Storda.*" A small island on the coast of Norway.

V. 57. "*Braga and Hermoder.*" Braga was the God of poetry. Hermoder was the son of Odin, who was sent on the embassy to redeem his brother Balder from hell. See *Gör. Edda*, p. 85.

V. 81. "*Fenris the wolf.*" He was son of the mischievous Loke, and so formidable to the Asi on account of his strength and ferocity, that they contrived to bind him with a chain of materials, which could not be broken. He revenged himself by biting off the hand of Tyr; but his chain will not be loosed, till the twilight of the Gods, when Fenris will break forth, and devour Odin. See *Gör. Edda*, p. 53. and 91.

V. 85. "This line will be found also in Havamal.

V. 87. "*Heathen Gods.*" Heidin God. When this ode was written, the Christian religion was beginning to spread into Norway. King Hacon was the son of Harald Harfager, and had been educated in England at the court of king Athelstan, where he was instructed in the Christian faith. See *Torf. Hist. Norv.* and *Pontop. Gest. Dan.* 2. 69. He was attacked in the island of Storda by the sons of his brother Eric, whom he had driven from the throne of Norway. With very inferior forces he gained a complete victory, but in the pursuit he was struck by an arrow, and died afterwards of his wound.

THE
COMMENCEMENT
OF
BIARKAMAL.

*A fragment printed in Heimskringla, in Bartholinus Ant. Dan. and
in Stephanius's notes on Saxo Grammaticus.*

1803.

THE day has dawn'd; the plumed helms sound;
'Tis time to tread the battle's ground.

Wake and ay wake each friendly head,

The latest prop of Adils dead!

Strong Har, and Hrolf, whose darts ne'er fail, 5

Men nobly born, who never quail,

For wine, or women wake ye not!

Wake for the battle's hardy lot!

* * * *

NOTES

ON

BIARKAMAL.

THESE lines are stated by Schöning (*Norsk. Hist.* 1. 322 and 468. and *Heimskr.* 2. 347) to have been composed in the sixth century by Bodvar Biarke, one of Hrolf Krake's warriors, and were the commencement of a famous Icelandic song called Biarkamal from his name. The rest of the original, except a few lines, is now lost; but Saxo Grammaticus has given a Latin imitation of it in his history. It is a dialogue between Biarke and Hialto, on the fatal night, in which they were treacherously killed by the Swedes together with Hrolf Krake and all the rest of his warriors. Saxo's translation is very free, and varies also in not mentioning any names, and stating, that it was

night, not morning. It seems to have been admitted, that Biarke himself was the author of this spirited poem; but, as it must in that case have been composed the very night, on which he was surprised and killed with all his companions, I do not understand, how, if they had been his lines, they could have been preserved. I am inclined to believe, that they were composed by some other poet after his death, and have since been attributed to him, because a great part of it is supposed to be spoken by him; as Havamal has for the same reason been esteemed the work of Odin.

Adils was the son of Ottar king of Sweden, whom he succeeded; his principal residence was Upsala. See *Yngl. Saga*, c. 32. and *Hrolf Krakes Saga*, c. 14. He was dead at the time, when these lines are said to have been written; and had before his death been hostile to Hrolf, whose mother he had married.

V. 2. "*It is time, &c.*" Mal er vilmogum. Bartholinus translates vilmogum, milites; Schöning, ser-

vis; Stephanus, Vili filiis, *i. e.* Succis; and Peringskiold omits the word in his translation, as I have done. I am inclined to think, that Stephanus was right, and that the first lines were supposed to be spoken, before the attack, by the Swedes; who might properly be called the followers of Adils, their late monarch. In Hrolf Krakes saga his champions are enumerated, but the name of Har does not occur amongst them. Hrolf Krake was killed in 552.

END OF PART FIRST.

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